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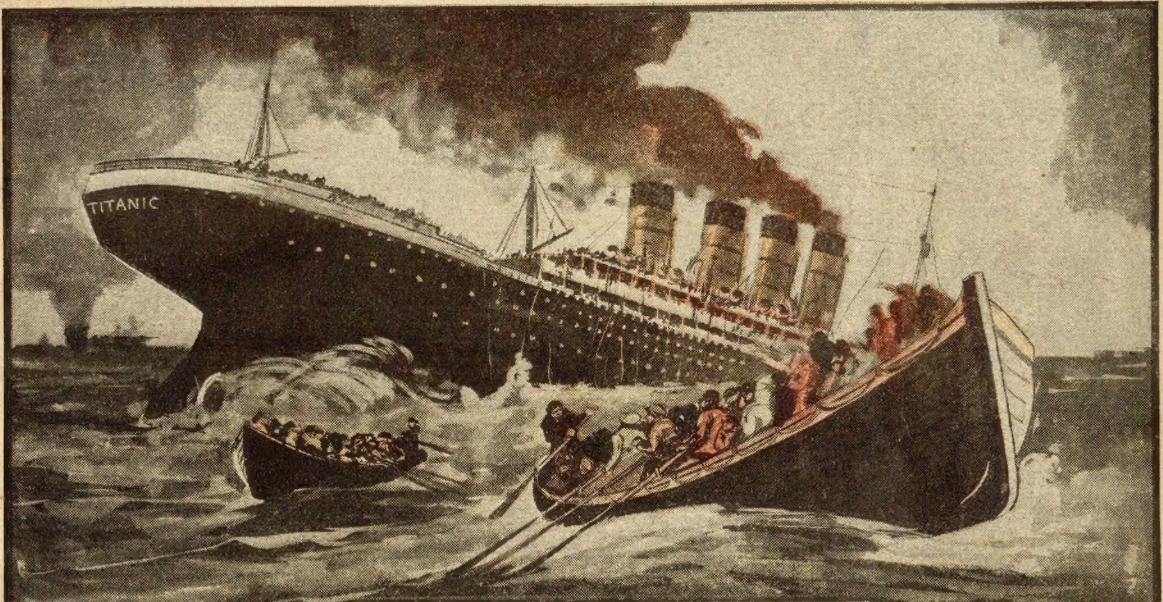
CHICAGO LEDGER

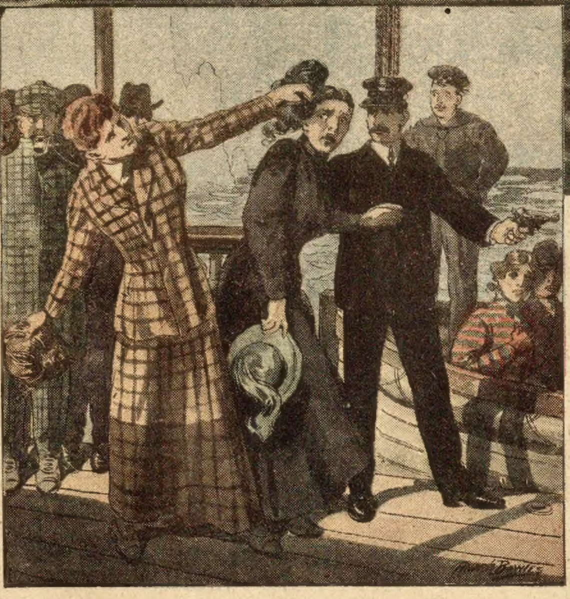
VOL. XL. NO. 18. CHICAGO, ILL., SATURDAY, MAY 4, 1912. SINGLE COPIES 5 CENTS.

As the Titanic Went Down;

Or, A TEST OF COURAGE

By ALVAH MILTON KERR





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MORE than one strange drama was enacted when the great Titanic went down, but not one of the tragic stories is stranger than the part played by Stephen Malloch, detective, and young Jack Marquart, who had fled to Europe in avoidance of the law. Not all the elements of the transaction are yet wholly known, but enough has come to light from that wild night of tragedy on the sea to make their story reasonably clear.

It had beginning in Roseburg, a staid, slow old town in western "York State," and from the beginning it had to do with young Jack Marquart, who was neither slow nor staid. He was gay and he was wild; that was known of all men; and he was handsome, which was known, particularly, of all women. How could he be else than good looking and gay when the blood in his veins was a blend of the red elements of a father who descended from the French Acadians, and a mother of a high Irish strain.

John Marquart, the elder, had been dead some three years when the bolt fell as from a clear sky, filling Roseburg with excited gossip, withering the son's reputation and searing as with fire the fond heart of his mother. The bolt was the charge, duly made and filed, that young Jack Marquart, employed in his uncle's bank, had taken, and was holding in concealment or had squandered, a startlingly big package of money that belonged to the institution.

Calvert Rosmore, banker and brother of Jack's mother, was naturally at first amazed and stunned, then, as naturally, was enraged beyond description. Another employe of the bank, Joseph Rosmore, son of the banker, was also shocked and amazed. He professed to admire his handsome Cousin Jack, but there were reasons why his admiration may not have been whole-hearted. When one man is exceedingly plain of face, and another is exceedingly attractive of form and feature, and there are women to be lost or won, what is fair to expect of the plain man? Fidelity to, and admiration of, his rival? It is not often so, for human nature is only human nature, and that is weak.

But tnat Jack Marquart loved any woman truly, save his beautiful mother, may be doubted. He was but twenty-three, in youth's buoyant springtime, and the world was wide and freedom sweet. In the black hour when, for the first time in his life, he stood behind the bars in the old jail in Roseburg, and saw the light of the sky streaked with restraining iron, fearful things rose before him—a vision of his mother's horrified face and a vision of years of toil and weariness and waiting inside of prison walls.

The last vision to his freedom-loving spirit seemed in that dark hour even more terrible than the first.

They had put the case plainly before him; he had called his Maker to witness that he was not guilty, but it effected nothing; his guilt seemed as clear and sure as the total of a problem in simple addition.

Jack remembered a night in which there were mixed some gay fellows and girls and champagne, and Joe Rosmore, seemingly gayer than them all, and he remembered a morning following when his usually clear mind was dim, and something about two officers finding a roll of fifty-dollar bills in his clothes, and of them trying to compel him to tell where he had secreted the remainder of a ten-thousand-dollar package that belonged to the bank.

As he looked out through the barred window he had moments of doubt, he even wondered if he was not guilty, if all that they charged was not true. And tnere before him unrolled again and again the terrifying vision of years of toil in the pestilential workroom of a prison and the degradation of being locked in a cell every night like a wild beast.

When morning came, Jack Marquart was gone. What sort of mad and superhuman strength wild terror had put into his sinewy young body was evidenced by the bars of the old jail's window; one of the bars had been bent sidewise and torn from its socket! The thing was incredible, but Jack Marquart was no longer there, but a creature abroad somewhere in the great outer world. That fact, his flight, fixed belief in his guilt in the wondering minds of the people of Roseburg, as soft cement swiftly becomes rigid and hard.

Even in the agonized face of his mother Jack had seen that belief arise white and awful, when he came into her room through a window that night, as he was fleeing from the law, and found her walking the floor anxious and distraught. But she had given him a great roll of money and all her jewels, and with sharp pain he realized that she, too, had seen the terrifying vision of her son in convict garb and had prepared for his flight.

How they parted was to Jack Marquart as a memory of a dream in which there was the travail of death, mingled with sobbing and words that choked him, and swift feet that were his own, carrying him away into the night.

One thing he remembered in that dream above all else, his mother's straining, tear-wet face white in the window as he looked back. The sight of that face never quit his memory in all the wild weeks that followed.

The police unloosened its forces. A detective was summoned post-haste from New York. He had more than one name, but his true one was Stephen Malloch. Strong, untiring, unscrupulous, keen, inventive, he was a man to be feared. He hunted men for money; sometimes he enmeshed and convicted those who were not guilty, it had been said, but he rarely failed to bring some one into the net. That was his business; in that lay fame and wealth.

He went over the ground in Roseburg carefully but swiftly. He listened to Calvert Rosmore's angry fuming, was closeted with Rosmore's son a half-hour, searched through Jack Marquart's home, and left it with the memory of a woman's face that haunted him. Then he set out upon the trail.

As with all born hunters of men, following the human trail was with Malloch largely a matter of instinct. Perhaps, to a degree, his faculty was a kind of clairvoyance. True, he employed reason and deduction, and invoked the aid of every sort of evidence that presented, yet much of the time he could not truthfully explain how he almost infallibly knew that a man had gone in a certain direction.

He found evidence that young Marquart had crossed into Canada, and followed him to Montreal, but there the detective found he had vanished. Had Jack Marquart gone to Boston or New York, or sailed for Europe on a vessel that cleared two days before? A young man answering Jack's description had sailed. He had booked for Cherbourg, France, but the ship would touch at Plymouth, England, cross the Channel to Cherbourg, then proceed to Southampton, its destination.

Malloch cabled a description of Marquart to officials in those three European cities, warning them to be on the alert to apprehend the young American fugitive. He then took a fast train to New York, and caught the outbound Olympic, sister ship of the mighty Titanic, the latter just completed but not yet in service. The Olympic was scheduled to make Cherbourg ahead of the boat from Montreal, the slower ship on which, supposedly, Jack Marquart had sailed. Steve Malloch smiled both outwardly and within, as in fancy he saw himself on the dock at Cherbourg when Jack stepped upon French soil.

But alas for the detective's dream. No slim young American, with "soft brown eyes, wavy chestnut hair, and as finely featured as a woman," landed at Cherbourg or Southampton; instead, an elderly gray man, who shambled and coughed, had landed with a throng of other passengers at Plymouth, and had taken a train for London. Detective Malloch cursed the slowness and stupidity of European officials.

Then began a man-chase that led across Europe. The elderly gray man who entered London went out of Paris, a week later, a French mechanic, bound for Morocco, or to lose himself from the world in Algeria. And Steve Malloch, baffled and mystified, but led by clew and conjecture and his unfailing instinct, followed feverishly. But it is hard to reckon with human emotions, with the fancies of the brain and the longings of the heart. In the brown-eyed young laborer's brain lived always a picture of his mother's face at a window, pale, suffering, as it might have been the face of one crucified. Afar before him lay the desertlands of Algeria, or, at best, a life among the dirty Moors. That was to be chosen, perhaps, as something less terrible than a life in an American prison, but it was exile! And was that remembered face always to be set in suffering? In his homesick, boyish heart he came finally to believe that he could return to Roseburg and clear himself of stigma, and put sunshine in that agonized face again. In his consciousness had grown a clear conviction of who was guilty, and it was not himself. But he well knew that all likelihood of clearing himself of the charge of crime must vanish did Steve Malloch once fasten the gyves upon him.

He knew he was followed; almost by accident he learned this in London, and alert with the mental keenness of impending peril, had eluded his pursuer. In Paris he saw Malloch, and the detective felt his quarry near, but he did not know the peasant boy that passed him. Now Jack Marquart had turned back, had set his face toward home. Malloch felt this to be true, and it puzzled and confounded him. He hunted and crossed the trail like a baffled hound, and finally turned and started for London.

Perhaps Malloch was a telepathist, and through that subtle, mysterious law of mental connection which no man has yet fathomed, sensed the fugitive's locality. Perhaps the born man-hunter is always so. A man may be very wonderful in faculty and not be a good man; a man may hunt men for money and still be a genius.

There finally came a day in London when Malloch thought surely the illusive, strange young American must fall into his grasp. Other detectives at Malloch's request were looking for Jack Marquart, but he was never to be found in the spot where they thought he properly should be, and wherever he stopped it seemed always that another person went away, and there was no Jack Marquart.

Then Malloch found that the fugitive have gone from London; clothed in natural garb and unchanged of feature, the young American had taken a train at Waterloo Station for Southampton. But it was not in natural garb and with unchanged features the detective's quarry arrived at Southampton; the same elderly, gray man who had landed from the ship at Plymouth, a month before, got out of Jack Marquart's exclusive section of the English railway coach, and took a small steamer across the Channel. The following day the mighty Titanic swung her bulk into the sea from the docks of Southampton, bound on her maiden voyage to America, and Detective Malloch was standing on her deck.

He counted on Jack Marquart boarding the Titanic at Cherbourg, and there he would clamp the irons on him. A throng of passengers swarmed across the gangplank to the Titanic's deck from the lighter-ship in Cherbourg Harbor, but the slim young American with the brown eyes and chestnut hair was not among them. There were old men and young men, but not one like the photograph of Marquart which lay in Malloch's breastpocket, a pictured face that he had studied under a magnifying glass a hundred times.

There was a face in the throng not unlike it, but it was the face of a girl, a girl in tasteful clothes, with abundant lightbrown hair, soft hazel eyes and fine complexion. She wore a small traveling hat, with a long auto-veil draped about her head, and her form was enveloped in a loose sea-going coat. She carried a fine traveling bag, and quietly and with little apparent interest in those about her, followed a porter to a stateroom.

Steve Malloch's sharp green-blue eyes followed her, his brow puckered in a knot, and his wide, thin-lipped, cruel mouth twitched nervously. Something in him seemed to whine and strain like a hound in leash, yet he rubbed his forehead and eyes like a man enveloped in a fog of doubt.

He walked through the ship unconscious of its splendors, and came out upon the upper deck and stood for a long time staring at the sea. The face of Jack's mother in Roseburg, the saddest face he had ever seen, seemed to grow and recede and recreate itself before him on the shadowy, glinting water, and by times that sad face, by some inscrutable process, merged itself into an image of the face of the girl who had gone into the stateroom.

When the bugles called the hundreds of passengers to dinner that night, Steve Malloch looked about the palatial diningroom for the face that was like, yet unlike, the sad face he had seen in Roseburg. It was not there, and he sat eating absently and hearing only half consciously the music of the orchestra sobbing through the great, sumptuous room. Later, when the stars were out, he found the girl reclining in a deckchair in a shadowy place on the port quarter, the girl with the wonderful eyes, the long auto-veil and the loose sea-going coat.

As she looked up at Malloch, her large eyes seemed to widen and glisten with a kind of swimming fire, then the long lashes drooped and she stirred and touched her draperies into more becoming outline, as a girl who had been scrutinized by a stranger might. Malloch walked away with his head swimming faintly; the face of the sad woman in Roseburg went before him.

After a time he came back, but the girl was gone. Half that night he thought about her, and all the next day he watched for her, but apparently she did not leave her stateroom. That night, however, when again the stars were out, he found her sitting in the same shadowy spot on the port quarter. He paused near her, but she did not seem to see him. He walked to the rail and stood looking out to sea for a while, then came back, and, taking off his cap and producing a card from his pocket, politely craved pardon of the girl. He was a bit lonesome. Would she be gracious enough to let him talk to her?

The girl stirred as if confused and surprised, and for a moment looked down, then bowed and said in an engaging, pleased sort of way that she, too, was lonely and companionship would be agreeable.

Malloch pulled a chair near and seated himself. He was astonished; the girl had spoken in English, but hesitatingly and with a broken French accent that made her utterance charming; her voice had a throaty melodious contralto quality that was curiously pleasant. Malloch handed her his card, and she attempted to read it, but the light was too dim. Then he told her who he was. She was delighted.

"Ah! zee detective life! How vonderful, how picturesque, how lak magic!" She had read stories in French of the detective life, stories most captivating; he could tell her things most interesting, most enchanting; she was delighted, she would listen!

And Malloch, astonished at himself and subconsciously wondering at the strangeness of the situation, told her of his life, of perilous things he had passed through, of ingenious plots and puzzles he had helped unravel, and of true happenings that were stranger than fiction. The girl listened like one enraptured, her big eyes burned and by times her fingers were locked together as in excitement. In quaint, broken Enlish she exclaimed in wonder at his bravery and cleverness; in snatches of speech, half English and half French, she praised him. Malloch himself became half intoxicated, she was so captivating a listener.

They talked until midnight, and again and again as Malloch's eyes dwelt upon the finely chiseled face in the etherealizing starlight, a vague film seemed to emanate from it and float before him as the sad face of the woman in Roseburg.

The French girl told him her name was Juliette Provost, and that she had always lived near Paris. Her father was dead, and she was going to New York; perhaps she would teach music in New York. Had she ever been in America? Never. It was a wonderful country, she knew, and she awaited a sight of it with almost breathless interest. She arose finally and thanked Malloch demurely, shyly. She laid the tips of her slender fingers lightly on his arm and told him he had given her a beautiful evening, and she thought him very, very nice. Why did she not come to meals in the diningroom? It was superb and the music was lovely, Malloch asked.

'Ah, yees, Monsieur, eet would be divine! But I cannot mooch eat while at sea," she replied. "I have the—what you call—meal? Yees, the meal, I have heem sent to my stateroom! That I find best."

Detective Malloch lay awake half the remainder of the night, wondering what was the truth about this strange girl, and asking himself if he had become bewitched; and always, as his mind turned to and fro, he found a floating face, the sad face of Jack Marquart's mother and the vivacious face of the French girl somehow merged in one.

Again Juliette Provost was invisible during the day, and again there was an evening of strangely intimate talk in the shadowy quarter where Juliette sat. And the fourth night of the voyage came, and though Malloch in his secret soul seemed to feel the truth about this bewitching, tantalizing daughter of France, he had utterly failed to detect proof of any sort that she was else than what she seemed. Besides, as a physical man, he felt that something sweet and enthralling had crept upon him. He asked himself in consternation if he were falling in love, and in such a case! Was it true that the intoxicated physical senses of his body were drowning his sense of suspicion and the more subtle processes of his mind? And yet he could not shake off the spell; all day long he thought of Juliette Provost's eyes and—cursed himself.

Then came the memorable night when the great Titanic went down. Proudly the mighty vessel strode across the sea into the mysterious night, the most stupendous craft that the brain and hand of man had ever fashioned. The world rang with wonder of this prodigious thing that moved swiftly forward across the quiet sea, crushing a thousand mirrored stars beneath her prow.

But there were forces lurking in the sea greater than the power of this mighty thing that man had made. A floating palace, inconceivably more sumptuous than any ancient king ever dreamed, a ship beside which all ancient ships were as children's toys, it moved forward under the cold stars with no intimation of approaching doom. In its palm garden, in library, in grand saloon, in luxurious staterooms, along electric-lighted decks, on the towering bridge, in the great kitchens, down in the hot bowels of the mighty fabric, life in grim toil, card-playing, song and love-making, dance and music and laughter and chattering, went on. And cold, pitiless monsters lurked in waiting ahead, and for the more than two thousand souls in the floating palace there were not half life-boats enough! The money-grabbers had unconsciously gone into partnership with the pitiless monsters that lay waiting in the sea ahead!

That was the setting of the tragedy, and that night for the first time Juliette Provost walked by Stephen Malloch's side along the promenade deck, her gloved fingers clinging lightly to his big arm, her splendid eyes looking out glisteningly from the wind-blown drapery of her veil. Malloch told himself he was a fool, but despite his reason the creature beside him fascinated him, this human being who with every faculty of body and soul was playing for liberty and life.

Then it came. One of the cold monsters lying in the deep reached up, as it were, an infinitely huge and flinty claw and tore a gaping track of ruin through the prone bosom of the forward rushing thing of strength and beauty that man had made. There was a grating jar from far below in the great ship, and the French girl turned her starry eyes upon Malloch questioningly. He was telling a boastful story, and had hardly noticed the shock. The ship sheered slightly sidewise and slowed up, and the ghostly protruding spine of the icy monster slipped by in the starlit gloom. There were voices and the noise of feet hurrying here and there, but as yet no excitement.

The girl took her hand from Malloch's arm, stepped to the rail, and looked down, then turned and left him quickly and went in. Detective Malloch watched her disappear, then walked slowly forward, his pulses beginning to beat faster as he went, for a wireless operator ran by him and hurried in the direction of the bridge.

When Malloch had gained the port bow he looked back; nearly eight hundred feet of the main deck swept rearward. Under the rows of gleaming electric bulbs he saw human figures darting to and fro; near him people began to hurry here and there like suddenly agitated ants. He went hurriedly to the upper deck; there was excitement on the bridge, signals, hoarse shouting, and about him officers and men went rushing. The vast fabric of the vessel was sharply listing forward, from far below came the muffled scuffle and tramp of struggling feet, piercing cries mingled with growling roars and the sharp crash of a revolver. A thrill that was both like fire and ice flooded the surface of Malloch's body. Without knowing why, he ran the entire length of the vessel, the sad face of the woman of Roseburg floating before him like a flying moon. He stopped near the stern of the vessel and suddenly asked himself aloud if he were insane, then he laughed strangely.

He turned and retraced his steps a short distance and came to the door of the wireless telegraph rooms. The "criss-criss, criss-criss-criss" of the magic instruments sounded like the rasping cries of gigantic crickets. He saw an operator with receiving headpiece covering his ears bending over a rasping instrument, while another operator was buckling a life-preserver to the back of the first, intently occupied operator. Both were pale. To Malloch events began to go swiftly, yet somehow slowly and with the odd reality and unreality of things in a dream. He heard shouted orders to man the life-boats, and that only women and children were to be permitted in them. People began to swarm onto the upper deck, and here and there a life-boat began to fill and be lowered.

He stumbled down a stairway to the main deck as in a dream; there was the sad face of the woman in Roseburg before him. He found his way to the French girl's stateroom. She was gone. Buffeted and jostled, he made his way downward to the next deck, and the great palace of beauty was full of wild cries and rushing, maddened people. White faces and faces that were black from toil crowded up from the steerage and the torn entrails of the disembowled ship. They on deck knew little of the hell that lay beneath them.

He looked about for Juliette Provost, and then began to hunt madly for her everywhere. After what seemed an age-long quest, he finally reached the deck where hung the life-boats. He looked a moment at the confusion, saw men tugging at ropes, heard women weeping, and heard cries that the ship was going down. Then for the first time into his blood rushed the fire of a wild fear of death. White and with cold sweat dripping from his forehead, he struggled down to his stateroom, wrenched open a valise that held disguises, threw a piece of lace about his neck, put on a woman's long silk coat, draped a veil hastily about his head, and rushed back to the upper deck. In him was not exactly cowardice,

(Continued on page nine.)

THE TITANIC'S DEAD.

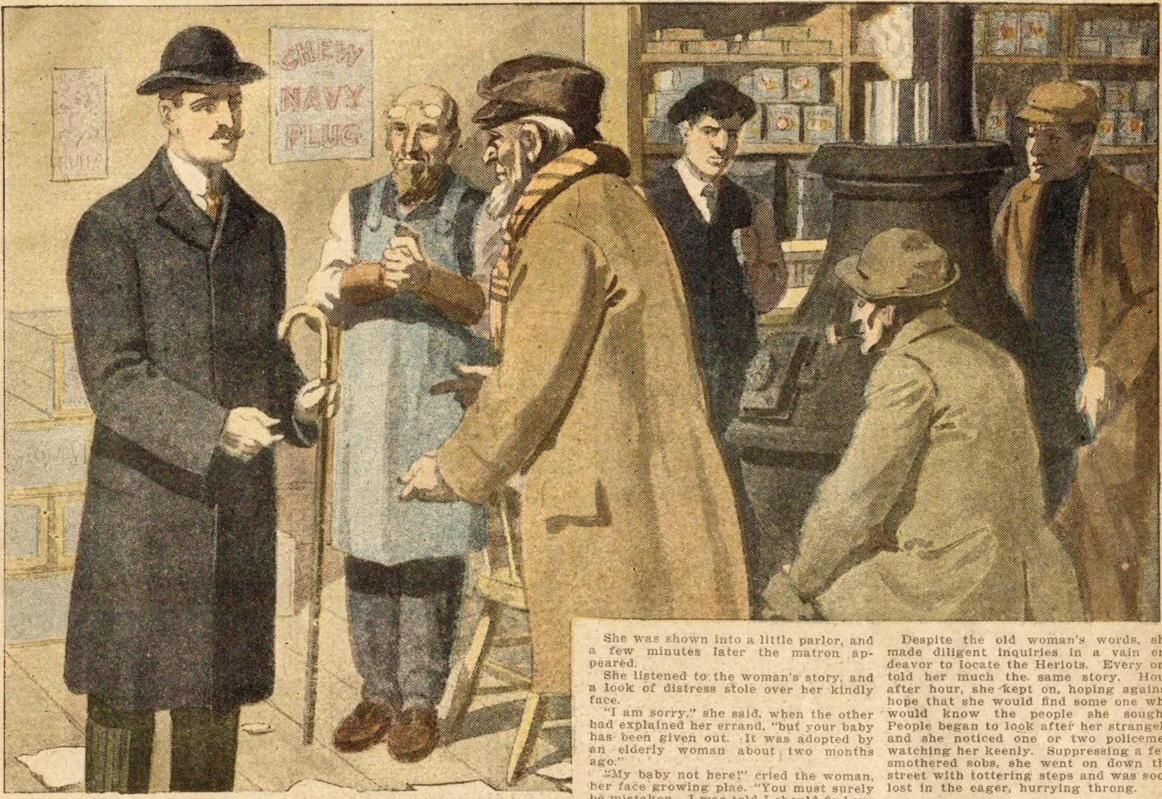
LORD of the everlasting hills,
God of the boundless sea,
Help us through all the shocks of fate
To keep our trust in Thee.

BENEATH the roll of soundless waves
Our best and bravest lie;
Give us to feel their spirits live
Immortal in the sky.

The Second Son's Plot;

Or, A BROTHER'S PERFIDY

By ANNIE BROWNLEE



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CHAPTER I.

IT WAS a chill October evening. A keen, frosty wind was blowing, and the dull gray October night was closing in.

It was the last case on the police docket for the day. A young woman, hugging a child to her breast, had been brought in. Her hair hung damp and stringy. Her dress had once been a rich brocade; it now hung in wet, clinging folds about her limbs.

"What is the charge, Perkins?" the magistrate asked, glancing pitifully at the woman.

"Attempted suicide, yer honor. I rescued the woman from the river near Sapphire Bridge at three this afternoon."

"Had the child with her when she attempted to drown herself?" the magistrate asked.

"Yes, yer honor, and she clung to it that tight I could not get it away from her."

The child gave a feeble cry, and the woman hugged it closer to her breast, and murmured tender baby words to it.

"What is your name, my good woman?" the magistrate asked.

For a moment the woman did not hear him, and went on trying to comfort the child; so the question was repeated.

"I have no name," she answered in a cold, despairing voice, that chilled those who heard it.

"You have no name?" the magistrate cried in surprise. "But think, my good woman; you must have some sort of a name."

But the woman shook her head.

"I once bore an honored name, but I exchanged it for another, and I have lost that," she said wearily.

The magistrate looked puzzled, and the constable hastened to explain:

Yer honor, the doctor who attended her thinks that the woman is of unsound mind."

The magistrate's face cleared.

"Her appearance would certainly justify that suspicion," he said.

The young woman hugged the child closer to her breast, and gazed vacantly about. She seemed not to realize that the eyes of half a hundred people were fixed upon her haggard, marble-like face

"Is there any one present who knows this person?" the justice asked.

No one present seemed to know anything about the woman.

The doctor who had examined her gave his report. The woman ought to be placed in confinement, though she was dangerous to no one but herself and child. Her attempted suicide was the common result of disastrous love affairs, or perhaps she was a married woman, deserted by her husband. But more probably she was one of the unfortunate in whom the shame of dishonored motherhood had produced insanity. She was obviously a person of refinement and education.

The woman still held the child pressed close to her heart, and gazed stonily about her. There was strength in the firm lips, wisdom in the large, expressive eyes, power in the broad brow, and indefinable charm about the tall, graceful figure.

"She must have friends somewhere," said the magistrate, and turning to the woman he asked gently: "Try to remember your name, my good woman. Your husband's name was——"

She seemed not to hear, but she pressed the child closer to her breast to still its feeble cry.

The magistrate tried again:

"What is your baby's name—Jimmie, Johnnie, Willie, George?"

She raised her dark, vacant eyes to the magistrate's face for a second and smiled peculiarly.

"My baby's name is Mark," she said, faintly, "for he is an eternal mark of a father's dishonor, and marks the first ray of hope in months of despair and darkness in his mother's life."

The magistrate coughed violently and several eyes grew dim.

"But what is your baby's other name? Mark what——?"

But the woman tottered and would have fallen, had not a constable caught her in his arms.

Acting on the doctor's suggestion, she was committed to an insane asylum, and the infant sent to an orphanage in the city.

Six months later, a woman young and beautiful, yet with the stamp of pain upon her face, stepped up to the door of the orphanage on the Richmond road, and rang the bell.

"I wish to see the matron," she said to the trim little maid, who answered the door.

She was shown into a little parlor, and a few minutes later the matron appeared.

She listened to the woman's story, and a look of distress stole over her kindly face.

"I am sorry," she said, when the other had explained her errand, "but your baby has been given out. It was adopted by an elderly woman about two months ago."

"My baby not here!" cried the woman, her face growing plae. "You must surely be mistaken. I was told I should find my baby here, safe and well."

"I regret that the child is not here," the matron began, real sympathy in her voice. "The little one had been in the orphanage four months and the possiblity of it being claimed at an early date seemed remote. An aged couple was anxious to adopt the child, and we thought best for his own sake to provide him with a home."

With a moan of heart-rending anguish the woman sank on a chair. A glass of water was given her, and in a few seconds she had sufficiently recovered to ask:

"Have you the address of the people who adopted little Mark? I must—I must find them and recover my child—my little Mark."

"Yes," the matron replied, "I can give you the address of the people who adopted the little one."

With the address clutched tightly in her hand she hurried away. An hour later she stood before the door of a little red brick house in Hintonburg. In one of the front windows was a card reading, "House to rent." The windows were bare, and the door locked; evidently the people had moved away. With a heart numb with anguish and despair, she leaned against the little wicket gate. An old woman was coming slowly down the street.

"Can you tell me where the people who occupied this house have gone. Mrs. Heriot I think the name is," consulting her paper.

"I dunno for certain, but I heard that the Heriots had gone West somewhere. A lot of families from this part have gone West. Great country they say, and you can git a farm for the axing. Were they friends o' yours? the woman asked, noting the anguish on the young face.

"Did they have a little child about ten months old?" the other asked, huskily.

"Yep. They adopted a young'un from the home on the Richmond road. I heard. Did you know them? You seem mighty cut up!"

"God help me! They have my baby. There is surely some one who knows where they went."

The old woman shook her head.

"No one here knows where they have settled. They weren't very neighborly," and the old woman passed on.

For a few minutes the other leaned against the gate post, her face white and her eyes blinded with suffering.

Despite the old woman's words, she made diligent inquiries in a vain endeavor to locate the Heriots. Every one told her much the same story. Hour after hour, she kept on, hoping against hope that she would find some one who would know the people she sought. People began to look after her strangely and she noticed one or two policemen watching her keenly. Suppressing a few smothered sobs, she went on down the street with tottering steps and was soon lost in the eager, hurrying throng.

CHAPTER II.

It was picnic day at Fraserville. All the young people—and most of the old people, too—were gathered in the beech bush that was used for a picnic ground.

A dancing platform had been erected, and was gorgeously decorated with evergreens and gay buntings, where the light fantastic was tripped off to the strains of a squeaky fiddle, played by Fiddler Tom, the village musician.

Tables were spread upon the green beneath the giant beeches. A barrel of lemonade, with a dipper hanging from a peg by its side, stood near.

Maidens in white frocks and gay ribbons tripped lightly about, merry peals of laughter rippling from their lips.

Fiddler Tom was untiring in his efforts to supply music for the dancers and valiantly scraped away to the tune of "Pop Goes the Weasel."

"Right and left through and balance two, and swing with the girl behind you," called a husky voice from one corner of the platform. "Salute your own and pass her by, and kiss the girl behind you."

Shouts of laughter followed as the lads tried to obey the man that "called off."

On the green under the beeches there were running races, and tugs-of-war, and jumping. The smaller children played "blind man's-buff" and "hide-and-go-seek," while the old folks looked on and laughed and applauded, and in the joys of their children lived their youth again.

Away to the left rose the smokestacks and the gabled roofs of the mills and factories of the Fanshaws, the big moguls of the village.

A little farther on, on the crest of a sloping hill, stood a tiny white-washed cottage, with glistening windows and snowy blinds.

At the door of the cottage stood a white-haired old man. His eyes sought the grove below, where peals of merriment were wafted to him on the evening breeze.

Plucking flowers, before the door was a young girl, with the sweet, innocent face of a little child. The fluffy golden-tinted hair was blown by the evening breeze in picturesque confusion. The eyes, large and blue, were intended for sunshine rather than shadow

The old man's eyes lingered lovingly on the young face, but as he noted the shadow in the eye and the drooping figure, his face grew anxious.

"Why is it that you are not with the picknickers today, Hope?" the old man asked.

"I—I didn't feel like going. My head has been aching again today," the girl answered, in a strangely confused voice.

"Your head didn't used to ache all the time," the old man murmured, turning anxious eyes to where his wife sat mending stockings by the white-curtained window.

Hope had moved off down the garden path, plucking a flower here and there as she went.

"I say, wife, I am troubled about our little girl," the old man said. "I fear that all is not well with the child."

A pair of dim old eyes were lifted anxiously to his face, and trembling lips replied:

"I too, am worried about the child, Josiah. She has not been herself for a long time. But we must hope for the best. We did a wrong thing, my man, in allowing the child to become so friendly with young Arthur Fanshaw. I fear he has won her heart, only to cast it away."

The old man did not reply for a moment, his eyes were following the drooping little figure among the flowers in the garden.

"Well, well, wife," he said, with a sigh, "we must be extra kind to the bairn, and coax the roses back to her cheeks, and the smile to her lips. I doubt me not but young Fanshaw thinks her a heap beneath him," he added, with a contemptuous wave of his hand.

"It is always so; when rich young men come a-courting poor girls like our Hope, they mean them no good. We had no reason to believe Arthur Fanshaw was better than the rest of his class. We should have sent him away, and saved our child," she said, bitterly.

"Well, wife, we can't help it now! The girl don't come of stock that would be likely to let the likes o' young Fanshaw spile her life. The lass is just a little lovesick now, but she will soon right herself. Don't worry, wife; no harm will come to the lass."

"I hope you are right, Josiah, but I am afeared," and she shook her white head doubtfully.

"Tut! tut! Never bid the devil good morning until you meet him," and he smiled re-assuringly. "There, I must be off, or I'll be late."

With a cheery good-by, he took up his lunch-basket and hurried down the path that led to the factories.

"Go to bed early, lass, and have that headache gone by the morrow," he called to Hope, who still stood among the flowers in the garden.

She waved him a silent farewell, and her eyes filled with tears.

"If he only knew," she sobbed, half aloud. "It's heartache, not headache, that ails me, dad. Oh, God, that I could die and save them this bitter grief and shame!" She sank down beside a cluster of rosebushes, and sought relief in tears.

"What is it, Hope?" a gentle voice asked, a few minutes later, and the gray-haired mother bent anxiously over her, and drew her head gently upon her breast. "What ails the girl?" she asked, anxiously. "Remember, if trouble overtakes a girl she should tell her mother all." But her only answer was a series of heart-rending sobs. "It is young Arthur Fanshaw that you are grieving about, my daughter? You must think no more about him! You should never have known him. Come, Hope, tell me you will try and forget him," clasping the frail little form in her arms.

"I can't mother!" the girl moaned. "I don't want to forget him."

"Then, God pity you, child!" and she pressed the sobbing girl closer to her heart. "Tell me, dear, do you love Arthur Fanshaw so much as that?" she asked, hoarsely.

"Yes, mother, I do. My very life is in his keeping!"

"Then, I say again, God help you, child!" she murmured, huskily.

Hope Fraser lifted her face to her mother's and looked at her earnestly. The cheek that once rivaled the rose in pinkness was now pale and colorless. The sunshine in her eyes had given place to shadows, and the merry lilt in her voice was gone.

Old Josiah Fraser was of mixed Scotch and Irish descent, and was a sturdy type of the Scotchman in Canada. His wife was an Englishwoman, sweet-tempered and content with her lowly position; and the first real trouble in her life was the cloud that hung so threateningly over her only child, the pride and sunshine of her life—her Hope.

Josiah Fraser was employed as nightwatchman at the Fanshaw mills and factories, and had filled that position for sixteen years.

The sun had sunk, and darkness was creeping up from the valley. Hope and her mother had returned to the cottage, and the latter had gone to drive the cow into the night yard, and bring a bucket of water.

Hope was bathing her face when she heard a heavy step on the path outside the cottage door.

"Ah, good evening, Miss Hope," said a strange voice, with vexing familiarity.

"Good evening, Mr.—Blackburn, I think," she replied, crimsoning painfully.

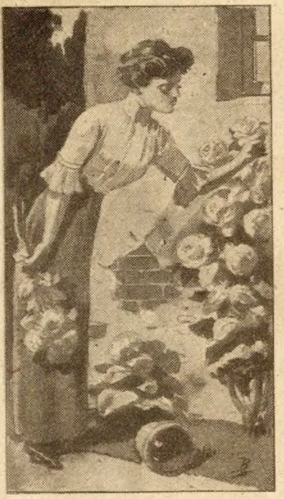
"Ah, just so. I am Lawyer Blackburn. You have no doubt heard your friend Mr. Fanshaw speak of me. I have the honor, I believe, to be numbered among his friends."

Hope did not reply; but the crimson flood spread over ears and neck.

The man was square-built with florid complexion and yellow hair, and walked with a short, jerky step. Instinctively Hope disliked him.

"Will you be s ated, Mr. Blackburn," the girl asked after a moment's awkward pause.

"No, thank you. I must be going in a moment. But what ails those pretty eyes? Not crying, surely?"



Plucking flowers, was a young girl.

"You will be kind enough to reserve your compliments for some one else, Mr. Blackburn. I do not desire them," Hope said, surprised at her own boldness in daring to speak to the great man so.

"Nevertheless, you must cease crying. Tears are not good for you just now."

Again Hope's face flushed crimson at the vulgar familiarity.

"If you have any business with me, Mr. Blackburn, kindly be as brief as possible, for my time is taken up this evening."

He smiled wisely, and proceeded.

"You are right, I have business with you. I bear a message from Mr. Arthur Fanshaw. He bade me tell you that all arrangements are made for your removal to the city. He would like to see you before you leave, however, and will be at elm by the brook at nine tonight. Shall I tell him you will meet him there."

Hope merely nodded. She could not form her lips into a reply.

The lawyer lifted his hat and walked slowly away.

There was something about the man that set her teeth on edge. Perhaps it was the soft womanish voice and perpetual smile that grated on her nerves. Or perhaps it was the laugh that rang hollow and false. There was a little laugh at the end of each remark, when the lips curled back and showed the teeth, like a cur about to bite.

CHAPTER III.

At nine o'clock Hope stole from her little room and went to meet her lover.

Arthur Fanshaw lay stretched under a giant elm, leisurely smoking a havana.

"Ah, Hope! here you are at last! I was beginning to think something had detained you," he said, glancing critically at the girl's loose jacket and swollen eyes.

Taking the little hands in his in a cold, conventional clasp, he went on:

"Why do you cry so continually, Hope? Have I not promised to take care of you? Mr. Blackburn remarked how red and swollen your eyes were, and I am sure others must notice it, also. For my sake, Hope, you must keep up.'"

It was more of a command than a favor he asked, and the girl winced.

"Why did you send that horrid man?" she asked.

"Do you mean Mr. Blackburn?"

"Yes; I detest him."

"Blackburn has never been popular with the ladies," Fanshaw laughed. "But I have found him a good friend."

"I don't doubt it. Mr. Blackburn would be a good friend to any one who paid him well."

"Perhaps you are right, Hope, but what does it matter, so long as he serves us well."

"I don't like the man," Hope persisted. "I am sure there is nothing good or true about him."

Arthur Fanshaw's face darkened.

"Hope," he said, "it is all arranged. Mr. Blackburn will see you into the fast express tomorrow night. When you reach Ottawa, the person with whom you will remain will meet you there."

He kept his eyes averted while speaking, as though ashamed of what he was saying.

The girl lifted her eyes pleadingly to his face, while her white lips trembled.

"Not so soon, Arthur. Let me stay just a few days longer," she pleaded.

He looked at her steadily for a moment, and when he spoke again his voice fell on her ear with a cold, metallic ring.

"It has got to be, Hope. We have delayed too long already. People are beginning to talk, and I can't risk your remaining here longer."

The girl's eyes fell again, and the tears began to fall.

"Come now, you know it is all for the best. It would never do for you to remain here, you know."

There was silence for a moment.

"I never thought it would be so hard to go," she said, sobbingly.

He smiled carelessly and tried another plan.

"You are not going away forever, darling. You will come back well and happy."

The words affected her strangely. Her hands trembled, and her fingers clasped and unclasped convulsively. After a while she grew calmer, and remarked:

"I have a strange presentiment that if I ever return it will not be to happiness, but to misery."

Her head was bowed in her hands, and her heart filled with terrible despair.

"I will have to say good-by to all the pretty little nooks where I used to love to sit and read, or do my needlework. There is the old log under the cherry tree in the garden, and the seat father made me beside the brook, where I loved to sit and watch the little trout playing. And then there is this dear old tree. In its shade I have read the most delightful stories; and then, it was here that I first met you, Arthur," she said, wistfully.

"You silly little goose!" he cried, half impatiently giving her hand a gentle little pat.

"Then there are mother and dad. I can't say good-by to them," and her voice grew husky. "Little Willie Jones will cry himself sick, if I don't go to see him any more, and I promised Kitty Welsh, the lame girl, that I would dress her doll for her."

The memory of the things she loved, and was about to leave—perhaps forever—touched the springs of love and sympathy in the girl's childish heart, and her voice was drowned in sobs.

There was a look of impatient anguish on the man'c face. He took his handkerchief and brushed away her tears, and laid his hand gently upon the drooping head, with a gesture that was almost love.

Hope regained her voice.

"And then there's Miss Grace, I can't say good-by to her."

The man's face crimsoned strangely and he dug his heel into the ground impatiently.

"Come, Hope, don't be such a child! You are actually foolish!"

The girl lifted her pure young face, that had once been bright and beautiful as a summer day, to his, and with a pang he perceived how pale and drawn with grief she had grown.

With a sudden impulse she laid a hand upon each shoulder and gazed searchingly into his dark restless eyes.

"Arthur," she said anxiously, entreatingly, "are you sure you love me well enough to remember me when I am gone?"

"Yes, of course," he answered, playfully patting her cheek.

"I am very, very much in earnest, Arthur. Are you quite quite sure you will not forget me?"

"Quite quite sure," he answered, gently, and she seemed satisfied.

"And you will come and see me often, won't you?" she asked, in her childlike way.

"Why, of course," he answered, smiling.

The girl brushed the tears from her eyes, and for a moment looked almost happy. It was pitiful to note how the mere sound of his voice brought the sunshine to her face, but the shadow always followed.

"You will be ready tomorrow evening, Hope. You can make some excuse to go to the village, and Blackburn will meet you. Good-by for the present, dear. I will see you again soon."

He kissed her coldly upon the cheek, and was turning away, when he noticed the tears gathering in the blue eyes, and paused.

"There—just one little smile!" he said, gently, coaxingly. She smiled through the mist of tears. "There, that's better, that's a dear little girl! Good-by."

Arthur Fanshaw turned and walked sharply away. He had gained his wish. The girl would obey his will, yet the knowledge of victory brought him no satisfaction—no pleasure. He had been false to his own manhood, to the truest and noblest impulses of his nature, and he slunk away from the scene of his own abasement with a feeling of keen humiliation. That a man should cross swords with a woman on such unequal terms, and win by deliberate falsehood and deceit, was heartless and fiendish. A sense of the meanness of the act he had committed was full upon him, but if a spark of sympathy for the girl's situation moved him, it was closely intermingled with a personal view of the degradation that might come to a man from such an act of folly.

On the slope of the hill Arthur Fanshaw paused, and gazed down on the mills and factories belonging to his father in the valley. He knew every curve and crook by heart. As he gazed, the familiar figure of the old "nightwatch" could be seen, lantern in hand, going his rounds. A slight spasm crossed the face of Arthur Fanshaw. "God help and console you, Josiah Fraser!" he whispered involuntarily, and quickened his pace.

CHAPTER IV.

At a sharp angle in the road, Arthur Fanshaw came upon Mr. Blackburn. He had evidently been waiting for him.

"You were long in coming, Mr. Fanshaw. I have been to the Beeches during your absence, and I hear that your father is sinking rapidly."

"Has he regained consciousness?"

"No, and the will is still unsigned."

"I see," glancing sharply at the other. "Have you been able to discover anything more about Mark's parentage?" Arthur Fanshaw asked.

"Very little, but I am sure we are not mistaken."

Mr. Blackburn drew a photograph from his pocket and held it before the other's face.

"Have you any idea who that may be?" he asked.

Arthur Fanshaw looked long and earnestly at the pictured face; his own face had grown white and set. The face on the cardboard was that of a girl in her teens—a face good to look upon, pure and trustful, and in her arms was an infant

"That is the face of my mother," only a few weeks old.

Arthur Fanshaw observed calmly, and he drew from an inner pocket of his coat a photograph that was the exact counterpart of the one held by the lawyer.

"Ah! That photograph is the property of your mother, I presume?" the lawyer exclaimed.

"Yes; it belongs to my mother. I found it on the floor of her room, and thinking it might be useful, I took possession of it. But perhaps you will enlighten me as to how you came into possession of its mate?"

"Certainly! I was in a house in Hull one day lately. On the mantel was the photograph and I at once noticed the resemblance to your mother. I questioned the landlady, and learned that the original of the photograph had a very sad history; in fact, that she was the real Rose Thurlow whom I have been seeking. I discovered her marriage to your father, and the birth of two children. The elder child was called Mark, and was born a year before the marriage. The other son was called Arthur and was born two years after the marriage."

"You are sure of this, Blackburn. I will need positive proof, you know."

"You shall have positive proof. In a few days I shall have all the proofs complete. Do you understand the significance, if we prove that Mark is not your father's legitimate son?"

"My God, man! You are a devil!" The other broke in, cold beads of sweat breaking upon his brow. "I don't want to prove that Mark is not my father's son."

"Very well, then, you will have to reliquish your dream of becoming your father's heir. I believe you to be too sensible a man, Arthur Fanshaw, to throw away your chances of wealth, of a life of ease, for a few milk-and-water scruples. Remember, if Mark was not born in lawful wedlock, you are your father's lawful heir."

Arthur Fanshaw's heart leaped within him, but he preserved an outward calm.

They walked on in silence for a few minutes, Mr. Blackburn's constant smile parting his thin lips.

"I can't believe it, Blackburn!" the other observed with deliberation. "If what you tell me is so, Mark is three years my senior. I have always understood there was but a year between us."

"Of course you did, old boy! Since you had no memory of the incident, you had to believe what you were told. It was a very simple matter to mislead you concerning the dates."

A few minutes' walk brought them to the Beeches, the stately home of the Fanshaws. The front of the house had a wide veranda, almost hidden by clinging vines and climbing roses. Here and there you got a glimpse of cozy seats and reclining chairs, suggestive of cool comfort.

Just before the house the two men paused for a moment.

"By the way, have you arranged things with your little friend?" the lawyer asked, in that soft womanish voice peculiarly his.

"Yes; and I am not proud of it, either. The truth is, I am ashamed. I have committed the meanest act that it is possible for a man to commit against a woman. The thing is too mean, too debasing."

The lawyer's smile broadened until his white teeth showed with an impatient snarl.

"I see! How do you propose to mend matters, then? I thought you were doing this thing for her own good."

"Darn it all, man, I don't know how to mend matters! I have half a mind to marry the little thing. It would be the only honorable act I have ever done."

"Ha! ha!" laughed the lawyer. "Marry her by all means, and hate her ever after. No, Arthur Fanshaw, you have done the poor young thing harm enough. You would not make her happy by marrying her, for you have tired of her already. She does not belong to your sphere of life. Be sensible!"

Arthur Fanshaw kicked the ground

viciously, his forehead contracted into a frown.

"What does it matter? She has an education that few in her station of life enjoy. She is refined and lovable, in every way, and apparently has not grown tired of me. If I spoil my life, what does it matter. Life has been one long disappointment to me. What is a second son in his father's house? Little better than a servant!" he cried, bitterly.

"Would it give life a brighter aspect if you were not a second son?" the other asked.

"Oh, hang it all! I know what you mean, but you are mistaken. You must be mistaken!" There was dull irritation in his tone.

"It will be a very good thing for you if I am not mistaken, Mr. Fanshaw. You would then be your father's legal heir. Instead of the insignificant pence that will be allotted you, you would then inherit at least half a million."

The words of the tempter sank deep into Arthur Fanshaw's soul. He was suddenly possessed of a delightful feeling of ecstasy. His own importance was vastly increasing. Wealth, position, power, were dearer to him than his own soul. What mires of sin and degradation would he not wade through to attain them!

The two men entered the silent house where the master lay dying. Mr. Blackburn went into the parlor to be in readiness, should his services be required. Arthur Fanshaw, with a new feeling within him, a new sense of the greatness of the world, and his own importance in it, went and gazed on the unconscious, white face of his dying father.

Three days before, the elder Fanshaw had been thrown from a refractory horse, crushing his skull, and sustaining severe internal injuries from which he had never regained consciousness, and today the doctors had declared him to be sinking rapidly.

CHAPTER V.

Arthur Fanshaw was six-and-twenty. He was just a little above the medium height, with well shaped limbs and body, and his face was clean-shaven, save for a dark mustache that curled gracefully over the firmly set lips. He had large, expressive eyes, and a forehead broad and smooth from which was carelessly brushed back a wealth of dark, wavy hair. The expression of the physiognomy on the whole, was one of power and intellect.

His one great trial in life was that he was a second son, and that, as such, his elder brother, Mark, would inherit the bulk of his father's estate. He had brooded over his misfortune of birth until life had lost its golden tints for him. At the age of nineteen he left college, and began studying to be an architect. His labors were spasmodic, however, for the poison rankled deep in his soul, and would not give him peace. Taciturn and moody, he made few acquaintances and fewer friends. At night he would prowl the streets for hours. The mystery of the dark hours had a strange fascination for him. He made few social calls, and was rarely invited anywhere.

No one, perhaps, save his mother, suspected that beneath the cold, repelling exterior, lay an ardent, passionate nature. If a beautiful woman spoke to him, or touched his hand, his pulse would quicken, his face flush. But with a self-command that was wonderful he checked the wild passion of his nature, and brought it completely under his command.

One morning, while on a visit home, he was strolling moodily by the brook, when he observed the old "night-watch's" daughter in her favorite nook under the giant elm.

So it came about that the two grew to be first, friends, and then lovers. The day came when Arthur Fanshaw was disappointed if he did not see the girl's sweet young face in its accustomed nook under the elm. Himself a stern, silent man, he liked to listen to her innocent prattle. The stern mouth would relax, and the hard eyes soften, at some pretty story told. This went on for months and for once no gossiping tongues were set a-wagging.

At last he perceived that the girl's heart had gone out to him. She had grown shy and reserved in his presence, and a delicate pink would come and go in her lovely cheeks. The girl loved him with a love that had no thought of self. No sacrifice was too great, if it would please the man whom she worshiped as the heathen do their idols. She surrendered into his keeping her very heart and soul. He found that the restraint which he had placed upon himself was as nothing—mere silken threads.

A few weeks later the awakening came, and Arthur Fanshaw learned, when it was too late, that he did not love the child who had given him so much, and exacted so little. But he did love, with all the ardor of his passionate nature, another woman.

When he entered the room where his father lay, he stood long and silently by the bedside, scanning the marblelike face of the one who had lavished love and care upon him since childhood. Death was written unmistakably upon every line of the strong, noble face. Without a sigh of regret, or a caressing touch, he turned grimly away.

The white-capped nurse eyed him keenly.

"A strange man!" she exclaimed half aloud. "How unlike the other brother! His father's approaching death seems to affect him very little. A strange son, surely!"

When Arthur Fanshaw left his father's bedside, he immediately joined Mr. Blackburn in the parlor.

"Well?" the lawyer observed.

"He will not last long," the other replied. "Scarcely see the morning, I should imagine."

"And the will is not signed," the lawyer said, with his constant smile.

"Just so!" the other replied, calmly. "I say, Blackburn, can't you remember a pressing engagement you have for tonight?" Arthur Fanshaw asked the question with a wise look upon his pale face.

The lawyer looked at him for a moment, and the constant smile broadened into a grin of comprehension.

"That reminds me, my dear Fanshaw, that I should be in —— within an hour. A most pressing engagement, you know."

The two exchanged glances.

"I will order Ned to drive you there at once," Fanshaw said.

Ten minutes later the dog cart was at the door.

"If your mother is the Rose Thurlow whom I am seeking, then remember you are your father's legal heir," the lawyer observed, in a low, impressive voice.

"Blackburn," the other replied, "we must do nothing rash. Remember, she is my mother," and his voice shook.

The lawyer broke into a low, contemptuous laugh.

"Your mother, I admit. But who has had all the parental love, and the plums of life. You have always been held down. Mark has been the favorite."

"That is so," Arthur replied, and moved nearer the lawyer. "He was wrestling with a terrible temptation. "If it is as you say, it is beyond belief that my father would disinherit his own son for the son of another man."

"It would not be the first time the like has happened. Love for his wife might tempt him to shield her, even at such a price."

"He is my mother's son," the other replied.

"And the usurper of your rightful posiition and inheritance," and the lawyer's mocking laugh followed.

Arthur Fanshaw's breath came in gasps.

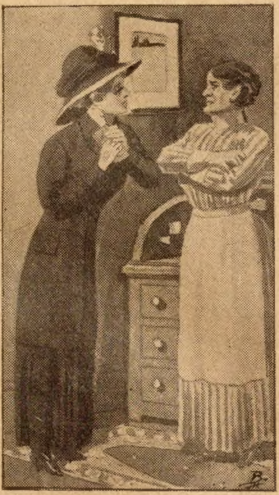
"It can't be, Blackburn. It is mere coincidence in names and dates. If Mark is not my father's son, my father must know it."

"To be sure he knows it! But for your mother's sake he would see you deprived of your rights. Why, man, you owe it to yourself and to society to expose the fraud!" Blackburn cried vehemently. "Everything justifies you."

"What will Grace say to this?" Arthur Fanshaw asked. "Her father would never allow her to marry a dishonored man," and his eyes gleamed strangely.

"Hearts like balls, are sometimes caught on the rebound," the lawyer observed.

The man hesitated and was lost. He was in the grip of a terrible temptation.



"I regret that the child is not here"

As the first pale streaks of dawn were stealing into the chamber, Mr. Fanshaw's soul escaped its earthly prison, and went to meet its God.

His wife and elder son remained by his side till the last. But his second son sat alone in the library, gloating over the glowing prospects for the future, when he should change places with Mark, his elder brother.

CHAPTER VI.

It was late in April, and the day was dark and dreary. It was evening, and the day's labor was over. A number of men were gathered for a chat in Jimmie Moore's grocery store in Fraserville.

"No one knows what is the matter, but he is a changed man since his father's death," the groceryman was saying.

"Aye, yer right, Jimmie, a changed man he is," said long John Smith, squirting liquid tobacco on the hot stove.

"They say as all is not goin' as smooth as might be up at the Beeches." Fiddler Tom explained.

"I hear the old man died without a will, and that they be quarreling over the dough," Tim Jones croaked.

An old fellow, with gray hair and a wizened face, removed the short clay pipe from his lips, took a long breath, and thoughtfully stroked his stubby beard. Then he said:

"Howsomever Mr. Arthur is mighty spry since the auld man has gone. He is changed, too, mightily."

"Right ye are, Ben," another answered. "And if I mistake not, Mrs. Fanshaw will soon jine the auld man, so thin and white she is gettin'."

"Ah, here comes Rip!" cried Jimmy Moore, the grocer, as a little old man came shuffling in.

"Evening, gents," he said, pushing back a dingy gray felt from his forehead. "You look cozy-like here. Give us a twist of 'bacco, Jimmie," throwing down a dime.

"How's business, Rip?"

"Pretty middling fair," he replied, cramming tobacco into a stubby clay.

"Ben to the city lately, Rip?" old Ben asked.

"Aye, jest home. I stayed a goodish bit this time. And what do you think, chaps? On Friday, as I was in Hull, feeling thirsty like (and ye know the water in Hull has got the Hull disease), I went into a hotel and got me a leg o' beer. And who do you think I ran plumb into—why Mr. Mark Fanshaw, of course. 'How do, Mr. Mark,' says I. 'When did you come down?' But he just looks at me hard like, and never speaks. Now thinks I, that's kinder queer, for Mr. Mark is not the one to give an old friend the cut. But the derndest part of it all is, I sees him this morning, and I says: 'You didn't stay long in the city, Mr. Mark.' 'In the city?' says he. 'I haven't been to the city.' Now what do you think o' that, and me seeing him with my own two gol dern eyes?"

"Well, that is sorter strange, Rip, but you may have been mistaken. I haven't missed Mark from the mills. I see him ride by every day."

"Mistaken be d—! Didn't I see him with my own eyes!" the peddler cried, angrily.

"What day did you see him in Lower Town, Rip?" asked young Geordie Moore.

"He was in the Grand Union in Lower Town, Friday afternoon, for I saw him myself."

"Yer wrong, Rip, yer wrong! Mark was at the mills all day Friday, seeing to the putting in of new machinery."

"Yer right, Geordie, so he was," said the man with the gray whiskers.

"What air you giving us now?" cried Rip, bristling all over like a cat.

"The Gospel truth, Ye've had a drop too much in Lower Town, Rip. Ye have been havin' bad dreams."

"Well, that's the biggest yet," cried the peddler, springing to his feet.

"What ye say?" cried Geordie, his eyes flashing like steel.

"I say it's a lie!" cried Rip.

"Be careful, comrade! If ye say that again, I'll pitch ye into the gutter," cried Geordie.

"Indade! And what would I be doing while ye would be doing the like o' that?" asked the irate peddler.

The grocer interposed.

"Stop yer wrangling, gentlemen," he said, sharply. "You're too hasty-tempered, Geordie."

"Youngsters should stay at home with their ma, until they are old enough to know what they are talking about," said Rip, resuming his seat.

"Then what for does he say it weren't true as Mr. Mark was at the mills on Friday?" asked Geordie, turning his back upon the peddler.

"Because he wasn't there," growled Rip.

Geordie's patience was ebbing again.

"Look here, if you were a few years younger, I'd plunk you one in the eye. As it is, I've half a mind to drop ye in the gutter."

"He weren't at the mills on Friday," the peddler persisted doggedly.

"See here, Rip, you may as well give in. Mark Fanshaw was at the mills on Friday, for I spoke to him there. Ye must have had a drop too much," old Ben drawled.

"Yer wrong, all of ye," shouted the peddler, getting up and going toward the door. "Mr. Mark was in Lower Town on Friday, for I see'd him myself!" he shouted from the doorway.

"Why, what is the matter, Rip?' asked a voice at his side.

"Why, its Mr. Arthur, to be sure!" cried the peddler. "Now, we will make these doggoned jackasses feel littler than a measly wasp," he went on, a triumphant smile dawning in his small slit-like eyes.

Arthur Fanshaw smiled his cold, peculiar smile.

"You appear to be excited, Rip? What's up?"

"Well, guess I am summat 'cited. I was just telling the yawhoos in there that I see'd Mr. Mark in Lower Town on Fri-

(Continued on page nineteen.)

Important to all Women Readers of this Paper.

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Women's complaints often prove to be nothing else but kidney trouble, or the *result* of kidney or bladder disease.

If the kidneys are not in a healthy condition, they may cause the other organs to become diseased.

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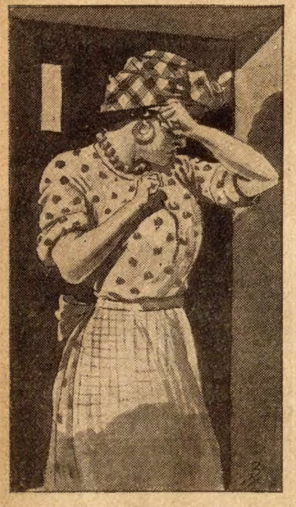

"Oh, God! is it true?"

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Begun in No. 17, April 27. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER V.

"HAD IT NEVER BEEN BORN!"

"BRING me my baby, auntie," Lucille said to Aunt Sabina, on the following morning, when the old darky came into the room.

Her voice sounded so faint and weak that Aunt Sabina looked at her quickly with a sudden fear.

"How you feelin' dis mo'nin', honey?" she asked. "Is you sufferin' any pain?"

A faint smile flitted across the pale, lovely lips.

"No, I am not suffering any pain," she replied. "I feel—at rest. Please bring my baby."

Aunt Sabina went into the next room, returning in a few moments with the child.

"Done open her eyes a-ready," she exclaimed, with pride, as she placed the baby in Lucille's arms. "She sholly am peart. I reckon de massa want her named arter you, Miss Lucille."

The young mother shook her head.

"No, not after me." The weak voice was very sad. "I want her named after her father. I want her to be called Ernestine."

"Well, dat am a bery pooty name," declared Aunt Sabina, approvingly.

"I hope she will be in every way like her father," continued Lucille. "I will keep her, auntie, while you go for your breakfast."

The old darky went out. Lucille lay looking down upon the child. Suddenly it awoke and looked up at her. Lucille caught her breath, thrilling from head to foot. It seemed to her that the child was looking at her with the eyes of Warren Ridgeley.

"Oh God!" she mumured. "Is my sinful love written in his likeness in the face of my innocent child?" She shuddered and looked away. When she again looked at the child, it was sleeping. She drew a breath of relief.

"It was only my imagination," she murmured. "My baby, God grant you may never suffer and be tempted as I have been!" She lay heavily among her pillows, great drops of exhaustion upon her brow. "I shall soon be at rest."

The hours of the day worn on. Ernest Compton had been in several times to see his wife, but he did not linger, for he saw that she was very weak; yet he did not guess the truth.

When the doctor came, he saw at once that she was dying. He was not surprised. He had hoped that she would rally, but she had not done so. As he stood in silence beside the bed, hesitating as to whether he should tell her, she looked up at him and said, with strange calmness:

"You do not need to tell me, Doctor. I know that I am dying. I have known it ever since my baby came."

He gazed at her wonderingly. She was young and beautiful, she had a husband who adored her, a child, everything for which to live. And yet she appeared perfectly resigned. She seemed to read his thoughts, and she smiled. He did not understand.

"Do you wish me to tell your husband?" he asked, with great gentleness.

She shook her head.

"No," she replied, sorrowfully. "I do not want to see him—suffer."

The life of the beautiful young mistress of Compton Manor went out very quietly with the setting of the sun. Her husband was sitting beside her, holding her hand. He thought she had fallen asleep. She lay in the red light from the setting sun so beautiful that her husband caught his breath, gazing upon her wondering and awestruck. Then, as the sun sank and the red glow faded, leaving the lovely face colorless and wan, a chill of fear struck to his heart. He arose and bent over her.

"Lucille!" he whispered. "Lucille!"

She did not stir, the half-smile on her marble lips seemed to mock him, as he realized that she was gone from him forever.

Some hours later Aunt Sabina went to the door of the library, in which Ernest Compton had shut himself, and knocked on the door. There was no answer. She tried the door; it was locked.

"It's me, young massa, yo' ole mammy; please let me in," she entreated.

A slow, heavy step crossed the room, the key was turned, the door was opened, Ernest Compton stood on the threshold. The room was in darkness, there was no light, even from the fire, which had long since gone out. As the light from the candle the old darky carried fell on her master's face, she uttered an exclamation of dismay.

"Massa, my dear massa!" she cried. "I know it am mighty hard, but don't grieb dis a-way. You hab got yo' chile; de young mistis hab lef' de chile fo' to com-fo't you."

"Would to God it had never been born!" he cried passionately.

"Now, honey, dat ain't no way fo' you to talk," declared Aunt Sabina.

"What do you want?" he asked dully.

"I'se gwine to build dat fire and den bring you some suppah," replied Aunt Sabina, firmly. As she went by him toward the fireplace, she murmured to herself: "He gwine to git ober feelin' dat a-way 'bout de chile. He'se jest 'side hise'f wid grief now, dat what he am."

Warren Ridgeley, returning from a walk just as darkness was falling, went into his mother's sittingroom and found her in tears.

"Why, mother," he cried, "what is the matter?"

"Oh, Warren," she replied, "Mrs. Compton is dead!"

He stood staring at her, white to the lips.

"Dead!" he murmured. "Oh, God!"

Startled, she looked up at him.

"Warren?" she half whispered.

"Mother, I love her!" he murmured, brokenly. He dropped into a chair and bowed his head upon his arms.

She stood looking at him, incredulous, aghast.

"Oh, Warren, she was the wife of your friend," she exclaimed."

He neither spoke nor looked up.

And the dead woman lay in her marble beauty, with a smile on her lips, done with "life's fitful fever," while the two men who loved her knew a bitterness of grief more cruel than death.

CHAPTER VI.

ARBUTUS.

A day in May eighteen years later.

Warren Ridgeley entered the grounds of Ridgeley Hall, crossed the lawn, and paused at the foot of the portico steps, looking up at the house. It was seventeen years since his eyes had rested upon the house in which he had been born. Immediately after his mother's death, which had occurred ten months after that of Lucille Compton, he had gone away, leaving the plantation in charge of a cousin, Mrs. Decatur, a widow in reduced circumstances.

Warren Ridgeley had spent seventeen years in travel, wandering restlessly from place to place, possessed by the demon of unrest, an unhappy man whose life was embittered by a hopeless love for the wife of another man. Lucille Compton had been dead for eighteen years, but he could not forget her; he had found it impossible to care for another woman.

At length, grown weary of his restless, wandering life, which had never brought him forgetfulness, he turned his face homeward. He had not notified his cousin of his coming, so there had been no one to meet him at the station, and he walked slowly home across the fields.

A feeling of sadness stole over him, as he stood looking up at the house. There was no one to rejoice at his coming, no one to give him a loving welcome. He thought with a pang of remorse of how the last year of his mother's life had been saddened by the knowledge of his unhappy love.

He sighed and moved forward to enter the house, but stopped abruptly as a young girl appeared on the threshold. His heart began to beat wildly as he looked at her. She was very beautiful, with hair that was a wonderful shade between gold and brown, dark blue eyes, a bewildering mouth, and a skin tinted on the cheek like a pale pink rose. She was tall, slim and graceful.

Warren Ridgeley's face paled. It seemed to him that the girl was very like Lucille Compton. She stood regarding him gravely and a little inquiringly.

"I beg your pardon," he said, at length, removing his hat. The girl flushed and seemed to shrink.

"You are," she began, then hesitated a moment, "the master?"

He started in amazement. Her voice was that of a lady, low, cultured and refined; her words were the words of a slave. A few swift steps brought him beside her.

"Who are you?" he asked.

A faint smile, that had a touch of sadness, crossed her beautiful lips.

"I am Arbutus," she replied.

"Arbutus?" he queried, with a start, for the word brought back to him the words of Olata nineteen years ago, "the woman, with hair like gold and skin like the arbutus flower has stolen your love from me." He looked at the girl. Her skin had the delicate white and the pale pink of the arbutus flower. "It seems that your name is Arbutus," he continued, "but that tells me nothing."

Her head drooped.

"I am the daughter of Olata, the octoroon," she replied.

He started.

"Impossible!" he cried. "You cannot be the daughter of——" he paused abruptly. "When were you born?" he asked, after a moment.

"Eighteen years ago." The girl's eyes fell, and a hot flush rose in her cheeks. He was gazing at her in sheer wonder. It seemed utterly impossible that one drop of negro blood could run in her veins. The daughter of Olata, the octoroon! He gave a great start. The girl was his child. A thrill of tenderness, of yearning went through him.

"Why, Warren Ridgeley!" exclaimed an astonished voice in the hall behind him.

He turned. A handsome woman, about thirty-five years of age, was coming toward him, with a surprised look on her face. As he went forward to meet her, the girl glided quietly down the steps and across the lawn.

"You're surprised to see me?" said Warren, with a smile, as he shook hands with his cousin.

"I am indeed," she replied. "Why didn't you write me that you were coming home?"

"Oh, I made up my mind quite suddenly," he explained. "Then I didn't take time to write."

"You haven't changed very much," Mrs. Decatur declared, as she looked at him critically. "You're just as handsome as ever."

He laughed a little abstractedly. He longed to question her about the girl, Arbutus, but did not know exactly how to approach the subject. Mrs. Decatur herself spoke of her as they walked down the hall.

"You were talking to Arbutus?" she said.

"Yes," he replied, suppressing his eagerness. He paused a moment. "She told me she is the daughter of Olata. She certainly could not have been raised at the quarters?"

"Oh, no, I brought her up. I took her from the quarters when she was a little child," Mrs. Decatur explained. "I was attracted by her beauty. Her mother did not seem to care for her, though she appeared reluctant for me to take her. The child had fascinated me, however, and I was determined to have her. I have educated her, brought her up like a lady, as the darkies say. Perhaps it was not wise, but I can't regret it. I have grown to love the girl."

"That is not surprising," said Warren Ridgeley, quietly. "Did you give her the name of Arbutus?"

"No, her mother."

In the meanwhile, Arbutus walked rather slowly in the direction of the quarters and entered the cabin of Olata. The latter, seated at her spinning wheel, glanced up and then went on spinning. Eighteen years had greatly changed the octoroon. Her rich color had faded, her heavy dark hair was threaded with gray; in the yellow pallor of her face her dark eyes glowed with a strange fire.

Arbutus came and stood beside her.

"Mother, the master has returned," she said.

The spinning ceased abruptly; the octoroon turned and looked at the girl.

"Have you seen him?" she asked.

"Yes, I have seen him," replied Arbutus.

"Has he seen you?" There was a strange suppressed eagerness in the octoroon's manner.

The girl's color deepened.

"I met him as I was leaving the house; he had just arrived," she answered. She paused a moment, then added, in a low voice, "Mother, is he my father?"

Olata looked at her strangely for a moment, then, with a low cruel laugh, she turned again to her spinning.

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"Slave gals, with white skins like yo'se, ain't got no fathers," she replied.

The girl winced, and a quiver of pain passed over her face.

"Mother!" she cried falteringly.

"I has to remind you sometimes that you is a slave," said Olata, mercilessly. "You seems to fo'git it."

"No," murmured the girl, in a low voice of pain, "I do not forget it." The octoroon had again stopped spinning, and was watching her with a sort of gloating smile on her lips, as though exulting in her suffering. Arbutus looked at her with a mixture of sadness and wonder. "Mother, why are you so cruel to me?" she asked, plaintively. "There are times when I cannot help thinking that you hate me. But surely no mother could hate her own child."

She turned away and moved sadly toward the door. There she paused and looked back wistfully. But there was something very like mockery in Olata's dark eyes as they met hers. Arbutus turned again and went out.

Olata sprang to her feet, glided to the door, and looked after her.

"Hate you?" she murmured. "Yes, I hate you as much as I love—her."

CHAPTER VII.

ERNESTINE.

In the May twilight, the evening of his return, Warren Ridgeley walked to the bridge, crossed the river, and ascended the terraced hill to Compton Manor. A light shone from the library windows across the law.

Warren walked to one of the windows, which opened to the ground and looked in. Ernest Compton was sitting at the table, reading. Warren stood gazing at him for a moment. The light from the hanging lamp fell upon his head, which was as white as snow. On his face was the look of a man who has known a great grief which time cannot heal.

A faint, bitter smile crossed Warren Ridgeley's lips. He knew what had written that look on Ernest Compton's face and whitened his hair—grief for his beautiful wife. He had loved her also, and his grief had been as bitter and as long.

He stepped into the room, entering as he had entered so often, even as a boy, when he had stolen away at night to find his friend and comrade studying in the library or reading a book.

Ernest looked up as Warren entered.

"Warren!" he cried, his face lighting with surprise and pelasure. He threw aside his book and went quickly to meet him with outstretched hand. "So you've come home at last!"

"Yes," Warren replied, as they clasped hands, with the same remorseful pang that so often had pierced his heart when he met the glad affection in the eyes of the man who loved him and believed in him. "I returned this afternoon."

"I have missed you more than I can tell you all these years," declared Ernest Compton, when they were seated. "What in the world made you remain away so long?" Warren evaded a reply with a half-smiling shrug of the shoulders. "Have you brought home a wife, Warren?"

Warren shook his head.

"No," he replied.

"I have often wondered why you don't marry, Warren," continued Ernest. "Ridgeley Hall should have a mistress. You should have children to come after you."

"Yes, I know I ought to marry," said Warren, gravely, "but——"

He paused, as the door opened and a young girl came rather impetuously into the room. She stopped upon perceiving the visitor.

"Come here, Ernestine," said Ernest Compton. The girl came to his side. "This is my daughter, Warren."

Warren Ridgeley started. It had not occurred to him that the girl, with her vivid coloring and dark hair and eyes, could be the daughter of Lucille Compton. He had looked forward with something like dread to his first meeting with Lucille's child. He had pictured her with her mother's face, her mother's slim grace. There was nothing about her that in the slightest degree resembled or recalled her fair, beautiful mother.

She looked at him with frank interest as he rose and shook hands with her.

"Papa has often spoken of you to me, Mr. Ridgeley," she said. "He was always wishing that you would come home. "She turned and went back to her father, seating herself on the arm of his chair and nestling her head against his arm. She reminded Warren of some one, but he could not place the resemblance; it baffled him.

"You found everything flourishing on the plantation did you not?" asked Ernest. "Mrs. Decatur is a very capable woman."

"Yes," acquiesced Warren. "I was sorry to find that Graves, my old overseer, was dead."

"Yes, he died three years ago. That fellow, Byrnes, has proved to be a very good overseer."

"So my cousin informed me. But I don't fancy the fellow. He impressed me unfavorably.

Ernestine glanced at him quickly, an odd look, resentful and passionate.

No more was said in regard to the overseer, and in a few minutes she went quietly away. She went out on the portico and stood leaning against one of the stone pillars, where the light from one of the drawingroom windows fell full upon her. After a little while her father and Warren Ridgeley came by, going toward the bridge. The latter lifted his hat and said good night. The girl responded rather coldly.

The slim form of a woman glided by the two men in the darkness. They paid little attention to her, thinking she was one of the negro women from the quarters. She passed so close to Warren Ridgeley that he could have touched her, but he did not guess that she was Olata, the octoroon.

She went on swiftly toward the house. Suddenly she stopped, as she caught sight of the girl on the portico. A great sigh of tenderness, of longing, quivered across her lips. She stretched out her arms toward the girl, while inarticulate words of tenderness broke from her lips. After a little while Ernestine turned and entered the house. The octoroon stood waiting until a light appeared in an upper window. She crept forward and threw herself on the ground underneath the window.

The light finally went out, but the octoroon still lay upon the ground beneath the window of the room in which slept the heiress of Compton Manor. The night grew chill and the heavy dews drenched her clothing and her hair, but she did not stir until the first grayness of dawn appeared in the east. Then she arose and glided away.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE OVERSEER.

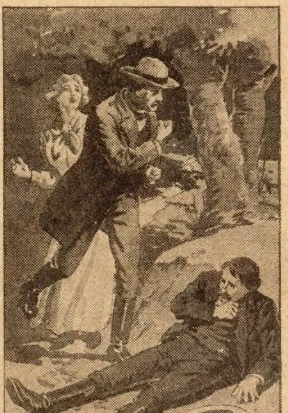
The spring and summer were past. The trees wore the rich and gorgeous tints of autumn, the odor of ripe grapes was in the air, in the orchards the trees bent beneath their burden of red and yellow apples.

Arbutus was walking slowly along the path from the quarters. Suddenly a shadow fell across the path, and lifting her eyes, they fell upon the bold, handsome face of Tom Byrnes, the overseer. She waited for him to step aside and let her pass, but, as he did not do so, she made a movement to pass him, when he again barred her way.

"I ain't goin' to let you pass, my beauty, till you give me a kiss," he said, while his sensual eyes devoured the beauty of her face. "I've been longin' for a kiss from them lovely lips of yours for a long time. Now I am goin' to have it."

The girl looked at him steadily, her eyes filled with intense aversion.

"You forget yourself," she said. "Stand aside at once and let me pass."



"You scoundrel!"

He broke into a coarse laugh.

"They've spoiled you up at the big house," he said, brutally. "They've made you forget that you're a slave and a nigger."

The girl turned very pale, but she controlled herself perfectly and answered him with quiet dignity, ignoring his brutal words.

"You have no right to act in this manner toward me. "If you molest me any further, I shall make a complaint against you."

"Oh, you will, will you?" sneered the overseer. "Go ahead and do it, and you'll find that Southern gentlemen ain't takin' up the cudgels in behalf of their nigger children. Now, I am goin' to have that kiss, if I have to take it by force." As he spoke, he caught the girl in his arms.

At that moment a strong hand seized him by the collar, jerked him free of the girl, and flung him into the shrubbery at the side of the path.

"You scoundrel!" cried Warren Ridgeley, "I've a great mind to horsewhip you within an inch of your life."

The overseer picked himself up, an ugly look on his livid face. Warren Ridgeley's eyes flashed dangerously as he looked at him. The fellow was a coward at heart so he slunk off. Warren watched him for a moment, then he turned to the girl who was trembling and very white.

"He'll not annoy you again," he said, gently.

Arbutus covered her face with her hands and burst into tears. Warren stood regarding her helplessly, controlling, with an effort, the longing that possessed him to take her in his arms and try to comfort her. From the first moment that his eyes had rested upon her lovely face, his heart had gone out to her, and as the days and weeks passed on and he saw her constantly, he grew to love her. But he knew he must not let that love be manifest, for though she was his child, she was also the daughter of Olata, the octoroon.

But as she continued to weep, her agonized sobs cut him to the heart.

"Don't cry in that way," he said, moving a little nearer to her. "Believe me, you shall never be subjected to anything of that sort again."

She made an effort to control herself, and gradually her sobs ceased. Her hands dropped from her face, and she looked at him gratefully.

"You're very, very good to me," she murmured.

Warren Ridgeley's heart beat violently as he looked at her. As she stood before him, pale, drooping, and sad, her resemblance to Lucille Compton, on the night she had sent him away, was startling and amazing.

"My God! What does it mean?" he asked himself, wildly. "Is this resemblance I see real, or a freak of my imagination?"

With an effort, he controlled himself and spoke to her quietly.

"I want to do all in my power for you," he said, with great gentleness. "I am going to set you free."

She looked at him wonderingly, half incredulously, her cheeks flushing, a great rapture dawning in her eyes.

"You will set me—free?" she murmured, in a hushed voice.

"Yes," he replied, with a smile. "You shall be as free as the best born lady in the land."

"To be no more a slave," she murmured, half to herself. "It seems like too much happiness, like a joyous dream."

She looked at him with shining eyes and lips tremulously smiling. Warren held his breath, as he looked at her—she was so beautiful. Suddenly she caught his hand and pressed her lips upon it.

"God bless you!" she murmured, and then went swiftly away.

Warren Ridgeley stood still where she had left him, his heart beating madly, every nerve in his body thrilled from the light pressure of the girl's lips on his hand.

In the meantime, Tom Byrnes, the overseer, rage in his heart, a sullen frown on his brow, made his way to the quarters and entered the cabin of Olata, to whom he related in language more forceful than elegant, all that had occurred.

The octoroon listened in silence, a faint, mocking smile on her lips.

"You might have knowed she wouldn't have nothin' to do with you," she said, when he had finished.

"There ain't no denyin' that she gives herself airs," declared the overseer. "I just reminded her, though, that she was a nigger and a slave!"

The octoroon's eyes narrowed cruelly.

"So you told her that, did you?" she murmured, exultingly.

"Yes," he replied, "I told her just that, damn her airs! It's spoiled her, bein' at the big house and bein' treated like a lady. If she'd been raised here in this cabin, she'd be free enough with her kisses."

A strange look flashed across the face of the octoroon.

"I'd kept her in the quarters if I could," she said. "I never wanted her raised like a lady. But her white skin

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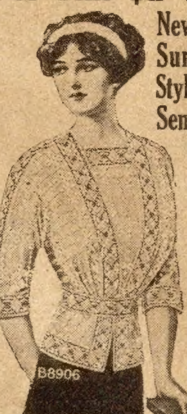

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and her pretty looks took the fancy of the massa's cousin, and she would have her up at the big house."

"To look at her, ye never think she had a drop of nigger blood in her veins," declared the overseer, as he arose to depart. "Well, I reckon I won't die of grievin' for her kisses, when there's a lady, born and bred, and not very far away, that's willin' enough to give me all the kisses I wants."

Olata glanced at him sharply, then she smiled incredulously.

"A lady," she exclaimed. "A lady take up with an overseer! You're only boastin'. 'T'ain't true!"

Tom Byrnes stopped at the door and looked back at her.

"I ain't boastin'; it's the truth," he said. Then, as she still smiled incredulously, his desire to convince her overmastered caution and prudence. "I could show you a note I've got in my pocket now, chuck full of love, sayin' as she'll meet me this afternoon."

"And—who wrote it?" asked Olata, with suppressed eagerness.

"Well, it's signed—'Ernestine, your own Ernestine,'" replied the overseer, with a laugh, as he turned and went out.

Olata leaped to her feet, with a fierce exclamation, and sprang after him. But at the door she stopped. The overseer was walking briskly away, with an air of great complacency. The octoroon suddenly began to tremble, as she looked after him.

"Oh God! Is it true?" she murmured, with pale lips. "Would she stoop to him? He's mean and cruel and low-down. She's a lady." She stood, for a moment, thinking. "He said he was to meet her this afternoon. I'll watch and follow him."

CHAPTER IX.

THE RENDEZVOUS.

Ernestine sat before the dressing-table in her dainty bedroom, her heavy black hair falling in masses on her bare shoulders.

"Mammy," she said, looking reflectively into the mirror and addressing Aunt Sabina, who stood behind her combing her hair, "my mother was very beautiful, was she not?"

"Ya'as, honey, she sholy war," replied the old darky. "De mistis had eyes lak blue fo'get-me-nots, cheeks like a pale pink rose and ha'r lak de yellar tars'ls on de co'n. She war tall and slim-lak, and she walk lak she keepin' time to music."

"I am not in the least like her," said Ernestine.

"No, honey, you sholy don't favor yo' ma none," declared Aunt Sabina, with a glance at the vivid dark face in the mirror. "You takes arter de Comptons; dey'se all dark-complected."

"I have always wished that I resembled my mother," said Ernestine. "I know when Arbutus and I used to play together, I often envied her that beautiful fair skin of hers."

Aunt Sabina grunted contemptuously.

"I'se s'prised at you, young missy," she exclaimed. "Arbutus, her ain't nuffin' but a darky gal."

"She's very beautiful," declared Ernestine. "Nobody would ever think that she was a darky."

"Thar ain't nobody no pootier dan my chile," murmured Aunt Sabina, tenderly.

The girl lapsed into silence, a dreamy look in her great dark eyes.

"What you studyin' 'bout, honey?" Aunt Sabina asked, after a little while, struck by something in the girl's face new to the loving eyes familiar with its every expression from babyhood.

Ernestine started.

"Why, nothing much, mammy," she replied.

A little later, she ran lightly down the stairs in her riding habit. Her father was coming out of the library as she reached the hall.

"It's a fine afternoon for a ride," he said, smiling at her.

The girl's eyes fell guiltily under his affectionate gaze.

"Yes," she murmured, and went quickly toward the door.

A half-grown colored boy was holding a pretty chestnut mare at the foot of the portico steps. Ernestine sprang into the saddle and was off like a flash. The boy stood looking after her with a grin.

"My! but de young missy kin ride!" he murmured.

Upon leaving the grounds of Compton Manor, Ernestine followed the road by the river until she reached a bridle path winding into a grove of pines. As she drew her horse down to a walk, there was a look of joyous expectancy in her dark eyes.

This capital story will be concluded in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you if you send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00 and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

NEIGHBORS.

"What have you got on your mind this morning?" inquired the hotelkeeper.

"I had a little disagreement with my new neighbor, Hankinson," replied the retired merchant. "As soon as he moved into the house next door he began wearing a path over to my place borrowing things. He borrowed everything from the pump handle to the horse and buggy. At first I was pretty cordial with him, telling him that he was welcome to whatever he asked for, but lately he has been coming over and helping himself, without even saying 'By your leave,' and this morning I called him down, and we had quite an oratorical contest."

"I knew trouble was brewing when you told me about that new neighbor a couple of weeks ago," said the hotelkeeper. "You were perfectly enthusiastic over him. He was a fine man, cultured and well informed, just the sort of man you liked to talk politics with over the back fence. Whenever a man gets infatuated with a new neighbor he is laying up trouble for himself, for neighbors all bite like serpents and sting like doggone adders unless you take a determined stand as soon as they camp in your vicinity, letting them know that you won't stand for any liberties.

"When I was keeping house down on Gravel street I had lots of experience with neighbors and I learned a few things. The houses there are all rented, and first one family would move in and then another, and I had so much confidence in human nature that I took kindly to them all, until my wisdom teeth were cut. If I had my way neighbors would be abolished, for they're all chips from the same block. Every man should be required by law to live by himself in the middle of a forty-acre field, and then there wouldn't be so much hard feeling in this world.

"Most neighbors borrow things, and that's a nuisance. My neighbors on Gravel street used to fairly swarm into my humble abode, borrowing cooking utensils and bootjacks and cats and everything you could think of. I remember one evening I went home tired and expected to have a pleasant time reading. I asked my wife where a certain book was, and she said that Mrs. Quilby had borrowed it. Then I asked her to light the lamp, and I'd read the cookbook, but it seemed that Mrs. Spry had borrowed the lamp.

"'Well, doggone it,' said I, 'just tell me where my easy chair is, and I'll have a good time resting in the dark.' But Mrs. Wintergreen had borrowed my easy chair. I felt my anger rising, and said: 'Let me have any old chair, so I can doze by the fireplace.' Then it developed that Mrs. Jagway had borrowed the fireplace.

"It was that way all the time, and so I sat down and figured over it, and realized that something would have to be done.

"Next day a family named Corpington moved into the house next door. There was a grandmother, about 100 years old, among their assets, and my wife said we should invite her into our house until they got things straightened around, for the day was cold and there was no fire in the house they were moving into. So we invited the old woman over, and as soon as she got into our vine-covered cottage she gave a yell and fell down in a heap, and we had to carry her to bed and send for a doctor.

"We kept her there a week or so until she was convalescent, and then I asked her people to take her off my hands, but they said they'd see me in Belgium first, I inveigled her into my house, they said, in a determined effort to rob them of the only grandmother they had, and now I could keep her. Grandmothers were not returnable, the man of the family said. Well, sir, I actually had to go to law to get rid of that doggone grandmother, and I changed my policy right there.

"After that when neighbors moved into my vicinity I handed them the ice tongs. I wouldn't permit any intimacy or cordiality until time had shown that they were all wool. I let them know that they were on probation, and if they came over to borrow anything, I advised them to go to the pawnshop. When a neighbor showed that he was worthy of the honor I admitted him to my circle of friends, but not before. That's the only way to do, if you want to live happy ever after."

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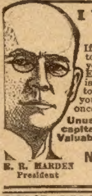

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As the Titanic Went Down.

(Continued from page two.)

but the mad cry of his body to be saved from annihilation. For the moment his life seemed sweeter and more valuable than all else in the universe. Dressed as a woman, he would escape death!

But there before him rose the face of the woman of Roseburg! Yet it was not her face but the face of the French girl! At sight of Malloch Juliette instantly threw off her outer wraps and stood clothed as a man! Handsome, erect, bright-eyed, she stood, Jack Marquart, looking at Malloch.

"Madam, let me help you into one of the life-boats!" he said, and smiled. "You can tell them in Roseburg that I preferred not to come back with—you!"

For a moment Malloch stood as one stricken dumb and stared at the handsome eyes before him, then suddenly he wrenched the veil from about his head, tore the lace from his throat and flung the silken coat from him. He put out his hand.

"I will stay with you!" he said, huskily. "I made love to you—I still love you—don't believe me a coward! I would rather die with you here in the ocean, and respect myself, than to die, years from now, in a bed but with my heart full of shame!"

Jack Marquart's eyes misted with tears. Suddenly he reached out and wrung the detective's hand. "But my mother," he said chokingly, "she now must always believe me guilty!"

"She will not continue deceived," said Malloch. "I have done things in my life of which I am ashamed, but in this last hour I hope I am a man."

He stepped over to a boat into which women were being assisted. He looked at them, then went close to a woman with a child in her arms. "Madam," he half whispered, "if you love your child; if when you are safe on shore you thank your God and us who remained and died, look at the young fellow here, and tell his mother, a Mrs. Marquart of Roseburg, in western New York, that her son died a hero and guiltless of the crime with which he was charged. Tell her that Malloch, the detective, said that Joseph Rosmore, the banker's own son, is guilty. Remember, as you love God, and do not forget!"

When he had spoken he turned, and Jack Marquart wrung his hand in a fervid grip. "Now, Mr. Malloch, let us help to save the women and children," he said.

And from out the cruel sea Malloch's strange message finally came to Roseburg, and that is why Joe Rosmore graces a cell in the Roseburg jail.

When Jack Marquart went down with the Titanic the last words that he said were, "Malloch, look, there is mother's face! She is smiling! How beautiful! Mother! Mother!"

"Yes," said Malloch, "I too, see her face, and thank God, she is smiling!"

The End.

* * *

A Tricky Auctioneer.

The new idea in business is honesty, openness, frankness," said Alton B. Parker, at a dinner at Esopus. "We used to conceal our plumbing, and very poor, unsanitary work it was. We expose it now, and it is altogether sound, wholesome, and satisfactory. Well, business is like that.

"When I think of some of the tricks that used to obtain in reputable business firms, I am reminded of the seaside auctioneer.

"This scoundrel once held up a ten-dollar gold-piece and said:

"'Guess the date on this piece of money, friends. Make a guess and a small purchase, and the correct guesser takes the coin.'

"So everybody in the crowd guessed; everybody bought some worthless rubbish, and the dealer netted a huge profit. Then, at the end, he looked at the ten-dollar gold-piece, held it up and said:

"'Now for it! Who guessed 1894?"

"'Me! Me! Me!' cried every man jack in the shop.

"The dealer smiled.

"'Then you guessed wrong,' he said, slipping the coin into his pocket. 'The date is 1812.'"

* * *

The Main Question.

The late Justice Harlan was traveling from Louisville to Washington, and before going to his berth went into the smoking compartment of the sleeper for a drink of water. Half a dozen men were sitting there and had used the water glass with the passing of a flask.

The justice took up the glass, smelled of it, and turned upon the smokers. Then he roared with his resounding voice:

"Who has had the temerity to drink whisky out of this glass?"

Everybody was silent for a moment, for Mr. Harlan's presence was awesome. Finally the owner of the flask said weakly, "I did."

Then, with all the figurative dignity which a Supreme Court justice might command, Mr. Harlan said:

"Well, where are you hiding the bottle?"

Betzville Funny-Haps

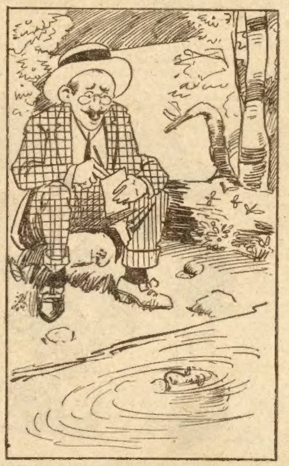
Ashdod and the Bisquito

By Ellis Parker Butler

[Copyright by W. G. Chapman.]

Early this spring Uncle Ashdod Clute made up his mind that he was pretty sure to die within twenty or thirty years, and he felt that it would be a shame to die and not leave anything to carry his name down to posterity, and that he ought to hustle up a bit if he wanted to enroll his name on the banner of fame. The only thing that troubled him was that there were not many things a man could do in Betzville to make his name resound around the world like a Junebug in a bass-drum, but one day, when he was down at the creek fishing, the idea came to him like a flash.

He says he was sitting there with a grasshopper in one hand and the fish hook in the other, ready to thread the grasshopper on the hook, when simultaneously at the same time a bee alighted on his left ear and a mosquito on his right ear. He says that any ordinary man might never have got an idea from that, but Uncle Ashdod can wiggle his ears to and fro like a flag in the breeze, and he wiggled them. He says he must have wiggled them too hard, but he wasn't paying much attention to his ears just then. He says that if he had wiggled his ears with just a slight wiggle all would have been well, but he must have wiggled them mighty strong, for it angered the bee and the mosquito, and at the same moment that the mosquito angrily bit him on the right ear the bee arose in its might and swatted its stinger into his left ear up to the handle.



With only his nose above water.

It was immediately after that—within one-tenth of a second—that Uncle Ashdod saw where a great improvement could be made in bees and mosquitoes. He says his ear began to swell immediately, but that before it had swelled enough to notice he had decided that the rear end of a bee could be greatly modified for the better. He also says that few men could think of two things at the same time, but that at the same moment that he thought of improving the bee he realized that the front end of a mosquito would be more popular with humanity if the stinger wasn't on it.

So, as soon as he got home, he set to work thinking how to improve the bee and the mosquito, and the more he thought about it the surer he became that life was too short for one man to improve both separately and that the right thing to do would be to mix the breeds of bees and mosquitoes. He said that the only objectionable part of the bee was its after-deck and rudder, so to speak, and that the mean part of the mosquito was its fore-deck and bowsprit, and what the world had been longing for these many centuries was a combination of the fore-end of the bee and the rear-end of the mosquito, thus forming one sweet and useful insect.

About that time a bald-headed man from Chicago came to Betzville to get material for a "History of the Prominent Citizens of Ringtail County," the cost of the book being only ten dollars, including the insertion of a hand-made biography of the purchaser as one of the most prominent of all, and twenty-five dollars additional for a steel engraving with a firm but gentle look. He strongly urged Uncle Ashdod to fall for it, saying that Uncle Ashdod had a bunch of the most biographical looking whiskers in all Ringtail County, and that now was the time to be steel engraved, before the price of steel went up. But Uncle Ashdod bade him wait. He told the man from Chicago that he would gladly uplift American literature by contributing his face and biography, but that he would not be ready until about potato-digging time. The fact was that Uncle Ashdod did not want his biography until he could run into it the facts about the creation of the stingless bee and the biteless mosquito, and he hoped, by the time pumpkins were ripe, to have a photograph of himself wearing the gold medal presented by the Society for the Prevention of Pain to Those Who Sit on a Bee.

Along about the 6th of August Uncle Ashdod opened the hermetically sealed incubator in which he had deposited the eggs of the bisquito, as he called the new insect. He had prepared the eggs carefully, cutting each egg in two and then gluing the rear end of a mosquito egg to the fore-end of a bee egg. He did this with several thousand eggs, and then put them to hatch in a butter tub in his attic. It was his first attempt at egg grafting, and he hardly hoped that more than one or two eggs would hatch, but the results far exceeded his expectations.

The 6th of August was a warm day and Uncle Ashdod was but lightly clad when he entered his attic. When he took the lid off the butter tub he uttered an exclamation of surprise, for it seemed that every egg had hatched. The butter tub was full of bisquitoes of the strongest quality. They were full of vitality and they seemed to recognize that Uncle Ashdod was a sort of stepfather to them, and several immediately arose and kissed him in the face and he uttered several exclamations of surprise in a hasty manner, and then he put his hand on the back of his neck and yelped like a painful dog. The experiment had been a great success, and one end of each mosquito was annexed to one end of each bee, but Uncle Ashdod had got the wrong ends of them. Each bisquito had a bee's stinger on its nose and mosquito's biter on its tail, and they were ambidextrous, as one might say. They worked something like a see-saw. A bisquito could balance on its legs on a tender spot, and then see-saw up and down, and at each teeter the stinger on one end would do its dire work. By the time Uncle Ashdod reached the attic door the whole production of his bisquito factory was showing him how it was done.

Uncle Ashdod was seen passing through Main street at about 3:30 o'clock accompanied by all the bisquitoes known to be in existence, and he was on the jump, and at every jump he let forth a yell, but at the speed at which he was traveling the reporter of the Betzville News could not tell whether it was a yell of triumph or a mere expression of annoyance. It was later learned that he had no thought at the time of expressing his triumph, but was simply hiking for the swimming hole in the creek.

Three days later the biographer from Chicago found him there with only his nose above water while several hundred bisquitoes sat patiently on a log near by. Occasionally a bisquito would fly toward Uncle Ashdod, who would then duck and swallow a quart of creek water. The gentleman from Chicago mentioned the subject of the biographical history to Uncle Ashdod at the time, but he did not wait for an answer. It seems that a bisquito answered him first. He ran all the way back to Betzville, and the history was forced to go to press without even a mention of Uncle Ashdod.

By the time we have a heavy frost Uncle Ashdod's friends hope the bisquitoes will be in a comatose condition and Uncle Ashdod can come out of the creek.

Read "Biffle and the Ghost" next week. It is a real "funny-hap."

* * *

Rather Wiry.

Mrs. Slimdiet—What has made your throat so sore Mr. Newboarder?

Newboarder—I think it must have been the steak.

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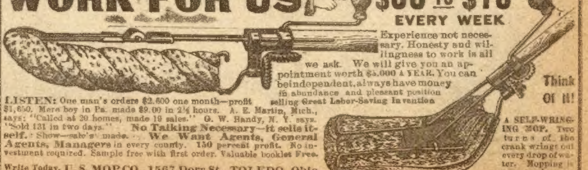

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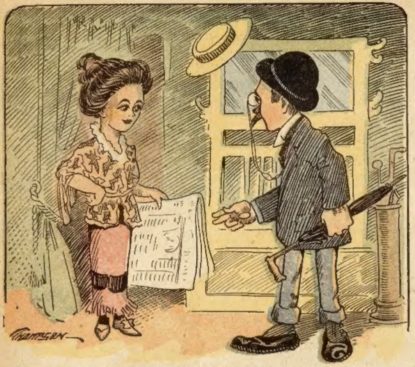


Wife—You don't need your rubbers and umbrella, dear. The morning papers says "fair" for today.

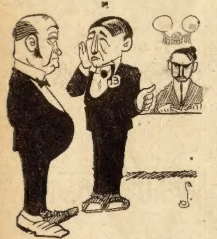
Husband—Uh huh! And how do I know the rubber and umbrella trust hasn't bribed them to say it?

A Fool's Opinion.

"I'm surprised," said Gabble, "that Taft hasn't hit upon a real remedy for the trust evil."

"Perhaps it's a hard thing to do," suggested Wise.

"Nonsense! Why, any fool could frame one up. I know I could."



Waiter—That man wants squash pie and we have only pumpkin.

Head Waiter—Take a pumpkin pie and squash it.

Perilous Comparison.

"Now," said the professor of astronomy, who was trying to be entertaining, "the most beautiful star I know of is—"

"Be careful, professor," whispered the hostess; "the lady to whom you are speaking is a prima donna."

What Is It?

"Well, Johnnie, I hear you have another baby at your house."

"Yep."

"What is it?"

"The nurse says it's a girl, but pa seems to think it's hard luck."

How It Happened.

"Do you think any girl ever proposes in leap year, as they say, Jennie?" he asked.

"Not unless she is obliged to," answered the maiden.

"H'm! I hadn't thought of that," he said, after a pause.

"But, George," she said, laying her hand affectionately upon his arm and looking into his eyes, "you, I am sure, will never force me to that humiliation."

"No—er—that is to say—of course not. I——"

The ice was broken and three minutes later George was Jennie's accepted.

A Motive Analyzed.

"I am looking, said Diogenes, "for an honest man."

"What's the use of bluffing in that manner?" rejoined the philosopher. "What you're trying to do is to start another investigation and become famous."

Consistency.

"I suppose you always say exactly what you think?"

"I try to," replied Senator Sorghum; "but I also try to avoid thinking anything it would not be expedient for me to say."

An Umbrella Astray.

"That's a nice umbrella you've got."

"Yes, it was a present."

"Indeed! Who from?"

"I don't know, but it says on the handle: 'Presented to John Robinson.'"

Unnecessarily Studious.

"You look very tired, young man; are you overworked?"

"I'm studying for a minister, sir."

"Well, why in the world don't you let him study for himself?"

The Real Trouble.

"Like most men I have my shortcomings, I suppose, but——"

"Oh, it isn't your short comings father objects to, it's your long staying."

The Young Housewife.

A quartet of market men had gathered in the market and were discussing the probable famine in butter, when a pretty young woman, whom they adjudged the be a new housewife, interrupted the conversation by a statement that she had come "to buy some butter."

"I wish to get three pounds," she said.

"Roll butter, ma'am?" the individual in charge of the butter and cheese stall asked politely.

"No," answered the shopper promptly, "we wish to eat it on toast; we seldom have rolls."

An Evidence of Lunacy.

"What's the matter with the fellow up on the ladder who is twiddling his fingers?"

"Why, he went crazy over buttoning his wife's waists."

"And why is he up on the ladder?"

"He thinks he has the contract for buttoning the waist of the Statue of Liberty."

His Way.

"At the beginning of each week Titewad gives his wife the money to run the house on during the week."

"I suppose he asks her how much money she wants, and then hands it over?"

"No, he asks her now little she can get along with, and hands that over."

Our Big River.

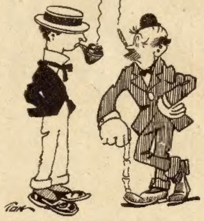
A Yankee clinched his argument with an Englishman as to the relative size of the Thames and Mississippi by saying:

"Why, look here, mister, there ain't enough water in the whole of the Thames to make a gargle for the mouth of the Mississippi."

A Base Slander.

Winks—Folks say you always leave immediately after the sermon, so as to escape the contribution box.

Jinks (hotly)—It's a base slander! The only reason I start so early is simply to get first pick of the umbrellas.



Mr. Cardodger—I'm going to take out some automobile insurance.

Mr. Carpusher—But you don't own an automobile.

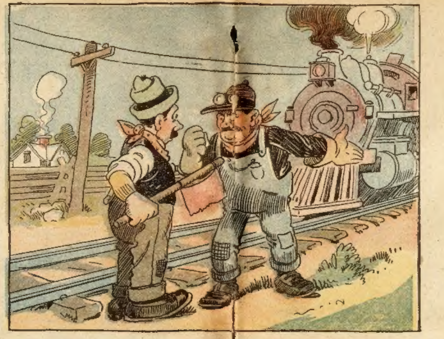
Mr. Cardodger—Well, you carry burglar insurance and I never heard that you keep a burglar on your premises.

A Cinch.

"They're married."

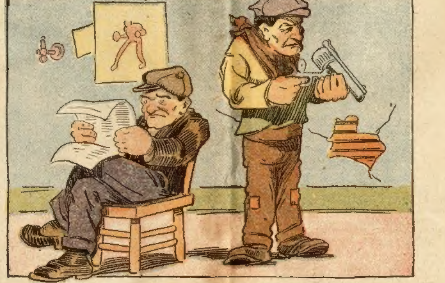
"What makes you think so?"

"I just heard him asking her if she was ever going to learn to put on her own skates."



Excited Engineer—What did you stop this train for?

Flag Station Agent—Is today Tuesday o[illegible] this week or last week?



First Crook (reading)—The Kersplash Irrigation Company has failed.

Second Crook—The thieves! I own $10,000 o' that stock wot I stole from th' Punkville Savings Bank."

Not So Very Strange.

Milkman—Strange thing just happened up my way. A woman had been ailing for a long time, and yesterday they found that she'd had a live bullfrog in her stomach.

Housekeeper—Did she take milk of you?

Found Here, Also.

Englishman—Have you any Dreadnoughts in America?

Yankee—Surely. I married one.

And a Kick.

"What're ye comin' home with your milk pail empty for?" demanded the farmer. "Didn't the old cow give anything?"

"Yes," replied the boy; "nine quarts and one kick."

In Search of Knowledge.

Jinks—Hello! Well, I swan! Studying a book of etiquette, eh?

Old Gruff—Yep.

Jinks—Want to learn how to treat folks politely, eh?

Old Gruff—Naw. Want to find out whether folks are treating me politely.

Saturday Night.

"Oh, Bill, what's the Knight of the Bath?"

"Why, Saturday, you bonehead."

Didn't Want to Smile.

Seeing that his repeated requests to look pleasant only caused his subject to scowl more fiercely, the photographer ceased to look pleasant himself.

"If you can't cheer up," he said, "we might as well call this sitting off. You seem an amiable sort of chap. Why can't you look pleasant when I tell you you?"

"Because I don't want to," said the man before the camera. "My wife is going to send these pictures to some relatives of hers whom I have never seen, along with an invitation to visit us soon, and it is my intention to look like a brigand, so they won't come."

Not a Weak Mouth.

The phrenologist was examining the bumps on Sambo's head.

"Curiosity and acquisitiveness abnormally large."

Sambo rolled his eyeballs and showed two rows of white ivory.

"Imitativeness, casuality and conscientiousness small, which, with your weak mouth, indicates——"

"Don' you be so shu 'bout me habin' a weak mouf. I kin crack nuts in ma teef."

Plaintiff's Suspicion.

Magistrate—Then when your wife seized the weapon you ran from the house?

Plaintiff—Yes, sir.

Magistrate—But she might not have used it.

Plaintiff—True, your honor. Maybe she picked up the flatiron just to smooth things over.

Maybe He Thinks So.

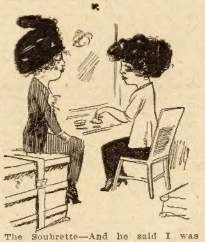
"Why are you trying so desperately to flirt with that man? Don't you know he is married?"

"He's a widower."

"He's nothing of the kind."

"Why, he told me his wife is an angel!"

"He lied. I know her intimately."



The Soubrette—And he said I was nothin' but a trained cat.

The Ingenue—What a shame! You ain't a bit trained.

Foresighted.

Bobby—Mabel, I want you to marry me.

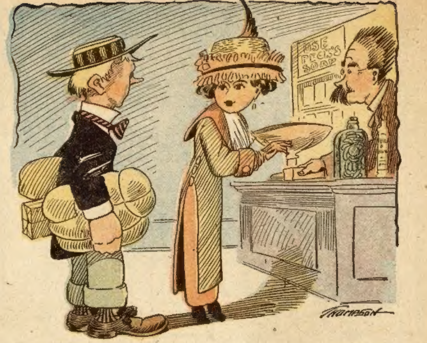
Mabel—But we're only ten.

Bobby—I know that, but I'm leaving my order in advance.

Much the Same.

Mrs. Hayseed—Did you go to hear the howling Dervishes while you were in the city?

Mr. Hayseed—No, but I went to Cousin Miranda's and she's got twins.



Young Wife—Arthur, dearest, how do they arrange these pickles in the bottle so nicely.

Young Husband—They pile the pickles up, Petsey, and then blow the bottle around them.

Thought Him White.

Ole Mammy Lize was dusting the Southern woman's drawingroom. She came to a small bronze bust of Shakespeare, and began carefully going over him with her rag.

"Mis' Juliet, chile, who am dis yere gemmen?"

"That is Shakespeare, Lize, a wonderful poet who died centuries ago."

"Dat him, miss? Lor', I'se done hyear o' Mistah Shakespeare lot ob times. Ever'body seems to know him. 'Deed, I done hyear so much 'bout him dat I allus thought he was a cullud gemmen."

Couldn't Walk That Way.

There is a floorwalker in one of the large dry-goods stores in this city whose great toes point toward each other in the most friendly manner.

"What will you have, madam?" said he to an Irish woman, who was looking hopelessly around.

"Calico."

"Walk this way."

"Walk this way, is it? Sure, I'd have ye know, sur, that my feet is not built that way, sur, and I couldn't walk that way if you'd give me the whole store, sur."

Took Too Much.

Mrs. Gadd—Did you ever? I heard Deacon De Goode come home last night howling drunk.

Mrs. Gabb—Oh, you're mistaken. The Deacon was out with some temperance men, and took too many temperance drinks, that's all.

"But he howled like a dervish."

"That wasn't drunk; that was colic."

Huxley's Opinion.

Belkins—Professor Huxley says an oyster is a far more complicated piece of machinery than the finest Swiss watch.

Mifkins—Oh, well, he probably ate too many at once.

One Enough.

Friend—Got a lawyer?

Prisoner—One.

Friend—Why don't you git two?

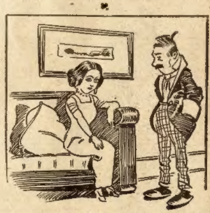
Prisoner—I ain't guilty 'nough fer that.

Familiar With Law.

First Tramp—I owe that old couple in that house a grudge, an' I'm goin' ter slip in an' kill one of 'em.

Second Tramp—Why don't ye kill both?

First Tramp—One's enough. The neighbor's has heard 'em say sharp things to each other, most like, an' if I kill one, th' other'll be hung fer it.



Father—Has that young man made any preparations for married life—has he saved anything?

Daughter—Goodness, yes, papa; why, he's saved almost enough cigarette coupons to get a mandolin.

Not the Proper Word.

"Did you send Mr. Dresser the samples he asked for?" inquired the tailor.

"Yes," replied the clerk; "I'm just finishing our letter to him. I'm just sending it 'Trusting to have your order——'"

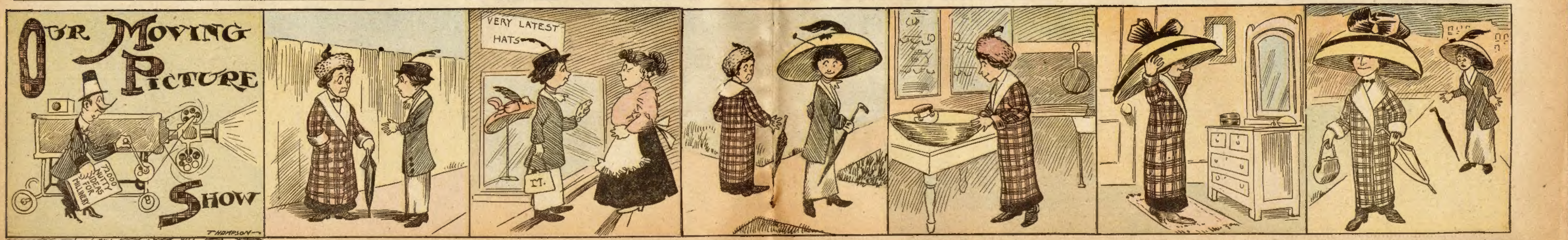
"What! Cut that word 'trusting' and make it 'hoping.'"

Why He Gazed.

Mrs. Binks—Of all things! That gentleman looked at your hat as we passed, just as a woman looks at another woman's bonnet.

Mr. Binks—Yes, he's the man I bought it of, and I haven't paid him.

THAT NEW SPRING HAT.



Ethelberta—I don't think I can afford to get a big hat this spring. Are you?

Marie—Just watch me!

Marie—Give me a big one. I've got a friend I want to make jealous.

Marie—Ahem! Here's where I squelch her! When she saw my spring hat she looked mad enough to eat it!

Ethelberta—Oh! That chopping bowl is just what I need! I'll borrow it right now!

And with this trimming tacked on I'll just show that spiteful Marie——

That she isn't in it. Ahem! Isn't it a lovely day?

Decidedly Unfair.

First Tramp—Ain't ye goin' through New Jersey this year?

Second Tramp—No, I ain't. Was there last year.

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Or, RUTH HOLME'S STRUGGLE

By Alfred B. Tozer

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CHAPTER XIX.

THE ESCAPED CONVICT.

ON THE morning of the second day following the happenings at the hospital, the warden of the State penitentiary sat in his private office, his feet resting on a steam radiator, a morning newspaper in his hand. He was a heavy, muscular man, this warden, with the rugged face and stolid manner of one accustomed to out-of-door employment. He was known throughout the State as a personal friend of the Governor, as well as a convention manager of no little skill.

While he turned the pages of the newspaper a guard entered, after a hesitating knock at the door. The official looked up reprovingly as the man approached his desk.

"I called to report in the matter of No. 4326," the guard said. "He is in the solitary for assaulting a shopmate, and the doctor says he will die there if the full term of his punishment is insisted on."

"He has been there before?" asked the warden, looking over a page in a heavily-bound volume which lay on his desk.

"Yes," was the reply. "He was sent to solitary something over two years ago, at the time of the escape of Jasper Holme."

"Knew of the premeditated escape and did not report," mused the warden

"Yes, sir."

"And also refused to give any information concerning the probable plans of the man who escaped, although it is believed the latter confided in him?"

"That is the man, sir."

"Worked with Holme in the hospital, and knew him well, too," mused the warden, running his finger down the written page. "The doctor says he is in a bad way?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, bring him here and send the doctor in."

The guard left the room, and the warden turned back to his newspaper. Only for an instant, however, for the door was opened again, and a young man bustled in and threw himself, without ceremony, into a chair by the side of the desk, tossing down a card as he did so

"O. Ketchum Quick," read the warden, picking up the bit of cardboard.

"Dramatist and reporter for the Star," the young man went on. "Yes, sir. Here on business for the Star. What's going on?"

The warden extended his hand and motioned toward a box of cigars. He never failed to make friends with gentlemen of the press.

"Pretty quiet," he said, lighting a cigar.

The two talked of the weather and of the latest prison report for ten minutes, during which time the reporter kept his eyes turning toward the door, which opened at last to admit the guard and No. 4326. The warden then faced about, and Quick picked up the discarded newspaper, as if indifferent to any official conversation which might take place. A moment later the prison physician entered.

"He is wanted in half a dozen States."

"Look this man over, Doctor," the warden said. "See if he is likely to suffer seriously from further discipline."

"He is in bad shape," was the doctor's reply. "I told the guard as much not long ago. He ought to be sent to the hospital."

"You were once detailed in the hospital?" asked the warden, turning to the convict, who looked weak and ill.

"Yes, sir," was the faint reply.

"You were there when Holme escaped?"

"Yes, sir."

"You knew of his plans for sneaking out in the guise of a guard?"

"I suspected something, sir."

"Yet you failed to report the matter to me?"

"Yes, sir," with a momentary lifting of the downward face.

"Why?"

"Because I believed him to be innocent."

"You set your judgment against the verdict of the jury?"

"Yes, sir."

"You even knew of Holme's future plans?"

"Something of them, sir."

"And up to this time you have refused to tell what they were, and so have prevented his recapture?"

"I was under promise to remain silent, sir."

"And yet you ask for leniency now?"

"No, sir. The sooner I die the better, sir. I understand that I am here because of a report made by the doctor."

"You would be able to identify Holme?" asked the warden.

"Oh, yes, sir."

"In spite of all the changes that the past two years may have made in him?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well," said the warden, "I may soon give you an opportunity of proving your statement. If your memory of Holme is as good as you seem to think it is, I may detail you back to the hospital."

The warden pointed to the door, and the guard and the convict passed out. As they did so Quick arose, yawning, from his chair

"Suppose I go out into the prison?" he asked. "I might see something worth turning into a story."

"Go ahead," replied the warden. "The guard who has just left will show you through. You will, of course, return here before leaving the prison?"

"Sure!" was the short reply, and the next moment the reporter stood in the stone corridor facing the convict and the guard.

"I heard what this man said about knowing Holme," Quick said, addressing the guard. "Do you really think he could identify the man who escaped over two years ago?"

At the conclusion of the sentence he turned his eyes toward the convict.

At that moment there were no guards in the corridor, and this one spoke to the convict.

"I am sure I could sir," the convict said. "This guard," he went on, "is my friend, the only one I have on earth, and you may ask me anything you like in his presence. He'll not report you."

"I only want to make a statement," Quick said. "In a short time, perhaps within the hour, you will be called upon to identify a man who claims to be Jasper Holme. This man surrendered himself to the police in New Orleans. If he is the man who escaped from the hospital, say so. If he is not, still say so. You will be protected."

"I have been told that I was to identify him as Holme," was the reply. "If I don't, I shall be left to die in the punishment cell."

"I suspected as much," Quick said. "Well, tell the truth. You will be protected. I am here to see that you are! Understand?"

"Yes, sir," said the convict. "I understand. I'll tell the truth."

The guard reached out and shook the reporter's hand.

"You're all right!" he said. "This man is on the level. That's why I like him He'll tell the truth, all right."

Quick brought his inspection of the prison to an end there in the corridor and went back to the warden's office There he found a bent old man, with white hair and beard, standing before the warden, handcuffed to a stalwart guard. The warden beckoned Quick to approach.

"You heard me asking that convict about Holme," he said, "and he declared that he would be able to recognize him under any circumstances. Now, I'm about to give him a chance to prove his assertion. This is Jasper Holme, the escaped convict. Is that right, Holme?"

(Continued on page thirteen.)

A Scotch Negro.

A Scotchman landed in Canada not long ago. The very first morning he walked abroad he met a coal-black negro. It happened that the negro had been born in the Highland district of Scotland and had spent the greater part of his life there. Naturally, he had a burr on his tongue. "Hey, mannie," said the pink Scotchman, "can ye no tall me wheer I'll find the kirk?"

The darky took him by the arm and led him to the corner. "Go richt up to yon wee hoose and turn to ye're richt, and gang up the hill," said he.

The fresh importation from Scotland looked at him in horror. "And arre ye from Scotland, mon?" he asked.

"R-richt ye arre," said the darky "Aberdeen's ma hame."

"And hoo lang have ye been here?"

"Aboot twa year," said the darky.

"Lord save us and keep us!" said the new arrival. "Whaur can I get the boat for Edinboro?"

* * *

A Warning.

Doctor Elmer Ellsworth Brown, the new chancellor of New York University, was talking about his desire for a deeper study of the arts in American colleges.

"In youth," said Doctor Brown, "the taste is formed; and it will be a taste for fine and beautiful things or else it will be a taste for tawdry and false things. Without great care it will be a taste of the latter sort. Let us be warned by the anecdote of the little Kiantone boy.

"This little boy was taken one summer day to the circus for the first time.

"'Well dear, how did you like it?' his mother asked, on his return.

"His eyes widened, and he answered with earnest and grave enthusiasm:

"'Mamma, if you once went to the circus, you'd never, never consent to go to church again in all your life.'"

* * *

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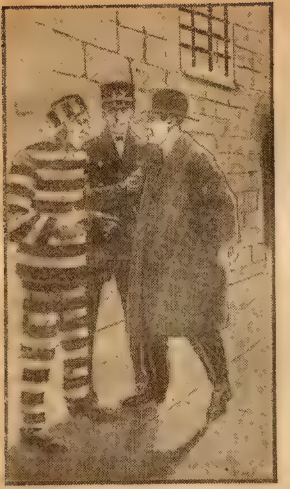

"If he is not, say so."

"Yes, sir," replied the old man. "I am Jasper Holme. I surrendered myself to the police at New Orleans because I was weary of living a hunted life."

"And because his innocence has been established," added the warden.

"I did not know that at the time," said the other. "I have been told that since, and am glad if it is true."

"The Governor will be here today," said the warden. "You can tell him your story in person. I have no doubt as to the result."

"You were here when Holme escaped?" asked Quick, of the warden. "You recognize this man as Jasper Holme?"

"There is no doubt of the man's identity," was the reply. "There are scars on his wrists and his forehead which render the identification easy to make."

At a motion from the warden the old man stretched forth his right wrist, showing a long cicatrice, and pushed back his long hair, disclosing a scar which must have resulted from an ugly wound.

"Besides," laughed the warden, pointing to the scars, "I guess the man knows whether he is Jasper Holme or not."

The official touched a button, spoke for an instant through a tube, and sat back in his chair.

"No. 4326 will soon be here," he said, then. "He will know whether this is Holme or not. He was his only intimate friend."

There was a short pause in the conversation, during which the guard unlocked the handcuffs which tied him to the old man and motioned for the latter to be seated. The warden busied himself at his desk, and the reporter sat wondering where and when he had seen the prisoner before.

He was about to suggest a previous acquaintance with the man, but refrained because of a second thought which showed the foolishness of such a course. The warden, he thought, seemed on a [illegible] of nervousness, an unusual physical condition for a man of his build and stolid face.

Presently the guard Quick had talked with in the corridor came in with No. 4326. The warden wheeled about in his chair and pointed to the old man, saying not a word. The old man arose and shambled toward the newcomer, his hand outstretched.

"You are 4326?" he asked. "You are the man I worked with in the hospital?"

No. 4326 did not see the extended hand, his eyes being fixed on the face of the old man. The reporter noticed that the old man lifted his right hand to his head and threw back his long hair, revealing both the identifying marks which the warden had pointed out. It seemed to Quick that the old man was [illegible] the other every possible chance to [illegible] a quick judgment.

Observing the strange attitude of No. 4326, the warden sprang to his feet.

"Did you ever see this old man before?" he asked of the man.

"Yes, sir," was the low reply.

"Where, and under what circumstances?"

"In a thieves' den in New York, sir. At the time he was recruiting a force for a train robbery in Missouri."

The bent shoulders of the old man straightened, but his eyes still sought the floor. Quick saw a tightening of the muscles of the hands, and noted a peculiar shifting of the brows. Then the mist which had hung before his memory of the man was lifted, and he knew where and when he had seen the man before. He was about to proclaim his new-found knowledge, when a motion from the warden's hand checked his speech.

"These men," he said, "have been separated over two years, and they never knew each other very well. The mind of No. 4326 seems to be clouded with another memory. Let us leave them alone together for a time. Guard, take them into the library and stand outside the door."

"Wait, if you please," No. 4326 said, as the guard moved toward him. "There is no need of that. I prefer to have everything take place before this Star man. What is it you expect of me?"

"I want you to say whether this man is Jasper Holme, who escaped from this prison, by your connivance, I believe, something over two years ago."

"It is not," replied the other.

"How do you know it is not?" urged the warden. "You might change your mind if he related to you things known only to you two."

"How well he may have been coached I don't know, sir," said the convict, "but of this I am certain. The man standing there is not Jasper Holme."

"Who is he, then?" demanded the warden, angrily.

"I can tell you who he is," Quick burst out. "He is Connor Qualey, a man wanted in half a dozen States for counterfeiting and robbery. He is, although now an old man, one of the most desperate criminals in the country."

The warden's face turned red and white by turns. The old man glanced about with foxy eyes and began edging toward the door. Convict No. 4326 stepped away from his guard and stood in front of him.

"You are an impostor!" Quick cried. "Tell me who paid you for personating Jasper Holme?"

"Keep your mouth closed," the warden ordered. "Guard, take No. 4326 back to the solitary cell. And you," he added, addressing the guard who had brought the old man—posing as Sir Jasper Holme no longer, but now fully recognized as Connor Qualey, the daring criminal—to the office, "place your prisoner where he can communicate with no one. I'm going to find out what's going on here."

"I reckon that crook's identity is not unknown to you," Quick said, meaningly.

"I'll report you to Bennett for a meddler!" roared the warden, shaking his fist.

Before the reporter could reply, the door was opened again, and two men stepped inside, blocking the outward passage of the prisoners and their guards.

"Never mind waiting to see Bennett," Quick laughed. "Here's Mr. Howard, the owner of the Star, and the Governor. Tell your troubles to them."

The warden arose to greet the two, and moved chairs forward for them. Instead of paying attention to the warden, however, Mr. Howard turned to Quick and asked: "What's the word?"

"There stands the man who has been posing as Jasper Holme," said Quick, pointing to the old man. "Name of Connor Qualey, a crook from away back."

The Governor, who had undoubtedly been informed of the situation before entering the prison, faced Qualey.

"You were hired to personate Holme?" he asked.

"Yes, sir, hired, and most of the money still owing me."

The crook spoke boldly enough, for he had nothing to gain by subterfuge now. He believed that the desperate plan for putting the Holme claims at rest forever was known.

"Who paid you?" continued the Governor.

"It is a long story," was the reply, "and it involves a good many men higher up."

"I see," said the Governor, glancing at the shamefaced warden. "Take all the time you want."

CHAPTER XX.

JUNE ON THE COAST OF MAINE.

When Ruth Holme regained consciousness, she found herself in a pretty room facing the south. Grouped about the large window, through which the winter sun was shining brightly, were flowers, and a bird sang in a cage swung between the lace curtains. She found herself very weak, and lay for some moments watching the kitten asleep on a cushioned chair, the brilliant fingers of sunshine twinkling over the neat carpet.

Her last memory was of that night on the street, of the policeman holding her arm with a tenacious grip, of the police wagon called for, of the red lights of the police station flashing by. She, of course, had not the slightest knowledge of how she came there, or in whose house she was.

Presently the door opened, and a motherly lady entered, advanced to the bed, looked down upon the wide-open eyes of the girl, and then sank into a chair. She had left the door ajar, and in a moment it was pushed open and a young man came in, bustling, yet with an effort at caution.

"How is she, mother?" he asked.

The motherly lady pointed to the girl, whose eyes were asking questions, and whose lips seemed to be trying to form words.

"Come out of it, has she?" asked the young man. "Now, look here, girlie," he continued, with a grin, "we're violating all the rules of the flowery paths of literature in our greeting. According to the best authors you should glance wildly about and observe: 'Where am I?' See? And I should bend over you gently and say: 'You must not talk.' What?

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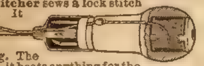

The Speedy Stitcher sews a lock stitch like a machine. It mends harness, shoes, or in fact anything. The latest, the best—it beats anything for the money. **Retails for $1.00.** Guaranteed to give satisfaction. Special price on sample to agents. Our wholesale prices lowest ever offered; over 200% profit. We manufacture our own goods, can sell the best Awl for the least money. Sells on sight. Send now for catalog and sample.

Automatic Awl Co., 48 Gardner Terrace, Worcester, Mass.

AGENTS---Here You Are

New Combination Tool. Made of drop forged, high grade carbon steel. Sells to Farmers, Plumbers, Machinists, Auto Owners, in stores and the home. 15 TOOLS IN ONE. Can be used as a vise. A machine shop for the home. Everybody pleased. Won't be without one. Sales easy. Demand enormous. Big profits. Rep. Va. ordered 276. Made enough profit to keep his family 6 months. Write quick for sample to workers.

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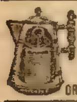

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$10.00 A DAY

Selling the wonderful White Flame Burner. Every one using kerosene lamps buys. No mantle to break. [illegible] Delights every user. Write quick for particulars. Territory going fast. Experience unnecessary. Sample postpaid 35c stamps or coin. Money back if not satisfied. **White Flame Light Co., Dept. 76 Grand Rapids, Mich.**

A SPLENDID OPPORTUNITY is now offered agents to handle well advertised brand of guaranteed hosiery for men, women and children. Direct from mill to wearer. Large variety of styles, weights and colors. Linen heels and toes. 25c up. Previous experience unnecessary. Liberal commission. Exclusive territory. Credit. G. PARKER MILLS, 720 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, Pa.

AGENTS: Awful Titanic Boat Disaster. Thrilling heroism. Large new book. Strikingly illustrated. Cloth style only $1.25. Millions will be sold quick. Big money. Experience unnecessary. Outfit free. Star Publishing Co., 222 Madison St., Chicago

AGENTS for PORTRAITS, FRAMES AND ART NOVELTIES. Samples and Catalog free. Address N. M. FRIEDMAN & CO., Mnfrs., Box 550, Martinsburg, Mo.

DON'T ACCEPT an agency until you get my samples and particulars. MONEY MAKERS Address SAYMAN 604 Sayman Building, St. Louis Mo.

TOBACCO FACTORY WANTS SALESMEN Good Pay, Steady Work and Promotion. Experience unnecessary as we give Complete Instructions. Piedmont Tobacco Co., Bx. V14, Danville, Va

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AGENTS WANTED Make $3 to $5 a day. Send 15 cents for sample and large catalog 500 articles. Richardson Mfg. Co., Dept. 7, Bath, N.Y

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AGENTS $5.00 per hundred for collecting names and addresses at home; steady work; particulars for stamp Valentine, Box 28, Desk G, Rocky Ridge, Md.

TACKLE our proposition right now. The greatest money getter in America. A wonderful 50 cent household necessity. Failure is impossible. HILKER, 3101 DIVERSEY AVE., CHICAGO.

AGENTS Can make $10 daily selling new book, "Titanic Steamship Disaster," told by survivors. Outfit free; 10 cents for mailing. Write International Bible House, Dept. M, Philadelphia, Pa.

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Would you like to get a lot of letters, circulars and packages? You probably know that manufacturers, supply houses, wholesalers and publishers buy names and addresses for the purpose of sending samples, advertising matter papers and circulars to. Good names and addresses are hard to get and are quite expensive. We publish an **AGENTS' DIRECTORY LIST** containing names and addresses carefully arranged in alphabetical order. We send these **Directory Lists** to concerns we know are anxious for good names to send advertising matter to. Write your name very plainly so the printer will not make a mistake; be sure to give your street number and town also plainly written so that any mail addressed to you will reach you without fail. We have been publishing the **Agents' Directory List** for several years and refer to the editor of this paper who will tell you we are reliable. All we ask is that you send 10 cents in silver and we will enter your name in our **Agents' Directory List** as above stated. Write today. Address

Agent's Directory List, Indiana, Pa.

home fool wrote those sentences nine thousand years ago, and writers have been using them ever since. Now, you sit up in bed and say: 'Vot iss?' Hey, mother?"

Ruth smiled at the novelty of the greeting. She had no difficulty in recognizing the young man as the reporter who had met her at the tank station on the night of her return journey to the city. The old lady pushed the reporter gently out of the room and returned to the bedside.

"That boy will be the death of me yet," she said, with a smile. "He's there at the 'phone now, telling the news of your recovery to every person in the city, I should think. You don't remember coming here, do you, dear?"

Ruth shook her head. The old lady was so kind in voice and manner that she put out a weak hand and touched her arm, as a child draws to its mother in moments of uncertainty and physical need.

"Well, my son and Marlow found you out in the country, you remember, and came to the city on the same train with you. Harley was with them, also the two girls who befriended you, but they kept away from you, because each party thought the other meant you mischief. Besides, each party was disobeying positive orders from the city editor, and each believed the other would present a distorted report of the betrayal. So you had that long ride all alone!

"However, when they reached the city, each sought to follow you to your new home, and so, while Harley and my son were each trying to throw the other off the track, they reached a better understanding of the case. When you swooned at the corner, they took you away from the policeman, who knew them well, and brought you here.

"By here I mean the home of Mrs Mabel Quick, mother of that irrepressible reporter, O. Ketchum Quick as he delights to call himself. You have been here something over a week, and Rose Carroll, a girl my son brought from the Star office, has been with you most of the time, though Nellie Quigley, the girl who found you on State street that night, and Jean and Jennie have been here too.

"And now you're most well, and the trouble is all over, and you'll soon see your father again,' added the old lady.

"Where is my father?" asked the girl, anxiously.

Quick rushed back into the sickroom before the mother could reply.

"Heavens, mother, why don't you tell the kid?" he demanded. "Never knew you to be shy on talk before! Where is father?" he added, looking at Ruth with a grin, "why, he's in the next room, almost well. We found him at the Shoreham Memorial Hospital and brought him here. Preston and Bennett had him placed there, and knew where he was all the time."

"Bennett?" asked Ruth. "The man who is at the head of the Star?"

"Managing editor no more," was the reply. "He's fired! Captain Preston's fired, and Angell's fired, Harley is the new city editor, and he's coming right up here. He's the man that started all this relief business going, you know. Say, and he's spoons on you, and——"

Again the vivacious young reporter was hustled out of the room.

"Yes it is all settled," the old lady said, picking up the story where the son had left it. "There have been things doing since you have been here. Mr Howard, the owner of the Star, interested the chief of police in the case, and then the kinks began to straighten out. When the crook who personated Jasper Holme confessed that he had been paid money for the work, the truth all came out.

"The warden was shown to have threatened a convict if he refused to identify the crook as Holme. It being further shown that the warden had received money for the work set aside for him by the defendants, he was dismissed by the Governor. The convict, No 4126 they called him, was pardoned for his honesty and truth. Now you are to get well as quickly as possible, and the troubles will be over. Your father will be out of the doctor's care in a few days."

"I have found true friends," whispered the girl.

"You have found lovers of justice," was the reply, "The plot to defeat your father's claims by bringing forward a false Sir Jasper Holme was a clever one, but it was defeated. There has been a compromise, and your father gets a great deal of money, three or four millions, my son says and the title goes with the English estates. Some papers were discovered over there that settled the disputed suits in your father's favor. Oh, I can't tell you all the good news, for I can't think of it all at once!" added the old lady.

While they talked the door opened again, and Jennie, the chorus girl, entered, walking softly to the bed with a subdued look on her face.

"Well," she said, "I'm glad to see them lamps lit. You've suttenly been a dead one for some time. How d'y' feel now, old sport?"

Ruth reached out and took the girl's hand, while Mrs. Quick laughed at the odd speech, and informed Ruth that she needn't look about the room to see real lamps burning.

"Say," Jennie went on, checking her slang whenever she thought of more conventional words to use, "we've all come out of this throw winners. Did you know that, Kid? The big boss on the Star has made Nellie stenographer, Rose having thrown herself away on this lady's son," with a grin at the old lady by her side, "and Jean and yours truly have swell jobs in the mailing-room. He's a prince, that Howard person."

While Jennie talked and laughed at the adventures with the "Only Girl" combination, which went on the rocks at the second stand, Harley, the new city editor of the Star, came in, half bashfully, and sat down by the bedside.

"Now," Jennie exclaimed, "two's company an' three's a crowd. Ring the bell when you want me, dear," she added with a grin, as she threw a kiss at the girl and closed the door.

That was a short and a delightful winter for Malcolm Holme and his daughter. With the suits all settled with the innocence of Sir Jasper Holme established by the Governor, with friends by the score, they both passed happy days waiting for the snows to melt on the coast of Maine. O. Ketchum Quick declared that he had never before heard of a Governor pardoning a dead man, but the executive statement that he was innocent and would have been pardoned had he lived, was sufficient, although not exactly a pardon.

Harley was very frequently at the Holme residence on the handsome boulevard, and the friends who had protected the girl during that dreary time were always welcome there, and always urged to make their home with the happy family. Harley saw that the brutal officers who had arrested Ransom and himself on that cold night were dismissed from the force, and that all the friends who had assisted in bringing about the happy result were rewarded.

The story ends where it began—on the rock-bound coast of Maine, only it is June instead of November, and the sea lies like glass under the towering cliffs. The old house, repurchased from those to whom it had been sold, is ablaze with light, and the grounds are bright with decorative lanterns. There is music in the house, and a white yacht in the bay is sending up rockets in honor of the marriage of the beautiful Ruth Holme with Morgan Harley, now managing editor of the Star.

"You have come back to your own," Mr. Howard said to Malcolm Holme, as the light of the rockets flashed across their faces, "but still it seems to me that the city is more desirable as a place of residence than this lonely coast."

"I waited here for the coming of my brother for many years," the old man said, "and they were not entirely unhappy years. I love the old place, and shall spend most of my time here during summer. I have my yacht, you know, and can touch the outer world in a few hours' time. And Ruth declares that this shall be her home in time, the city residence being the temporary one."

"She may change her mind," laughed the newspaper owner. "But there is a call from the parlor, and the wedding march will soon be sounding. Come!"

The End

* * *

In the Back of the Box.

"What did you hear at the opera?" inquired Mrs. Sanders when her husband returned from two days in the city. "You wrote me Mary was going to have a box full of friends last night."

"She did so," said Mr. Sanders. "Well let me see. I heard that the young man Henry's oldest girl is engaged to has a $10,000 salary and that he'll never save a cent of it after he marries her. And I heard that if some Mrs. Leonard doesn't attend right to her son before it's too late he won't have a friend left among either the young fellows or the girls.

"Then I heard something about skirts, kind of uncertain talk that was all I couldn't make much of it; and then there was [illegible] of [illegible] wedding and the presents. I [illegible] name, but 'twasn't anybody we know.

"I heard one real pretty piece of music sung by a lady and gentleman. I couldn't see 'em on account of Mary and her two friends being in front with their heads close together, but two of 'em singing together that way, with real powerful voices, they drowned out the talk. I guess the whole concert was real nice, but I'm telling you what I heard," said Mr. Sanders mildly, as his wife showed signs of exasperation. "That's what you asked me."

* * *

We are told that it is never too late to mend, but a lot of people manage to put it off until they forget how.

AGENTS WANTED

Agent's Sample Free!

"KLENITAL CLEANS EVERYTHING,"

Laces, Silks, Velvets, White Kid Gloves, Carpets, etc. Marvelous results. Agents make big sales; great profits. Men, women, boys, and girls wanted everywhere to make from $3.00 to $10.00 per day. Simply send name for big free sample and full details. Address

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WOMEN SHOULD BE PROTECTED

Against So Many Surgical Operations. How Mrs. Bethune and Mrs. Moore Escaped.

Sikeston, Mo.—"For seven years I suffered everything. I was in bed for four or five days at a time every month, and so weak I could hardly walk. I cramped and had backache and headache, and was so nervous and weak that I dreaded to see anyone or have anyone move in the room. The doctors gave me medicine to ease me at those times, and said that I ought to have an operation. I would not listen to that, and when a friend of my husband told him about Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and what it had done for his wife, I was willing to take it. Now I look the picture of health and feel like it, too. I can do my own housework, hoe my garden, and milk a cow. I can entertain company and enjoy them. I can visit when I choose, and walk as far as any ordinary woman, any day in the month. I wish I could talk to every suffering woman and girl."—Mrs. DEMA BETHUNE, Sikeston, Mo.

Murrayville, Ill.—"I have taken Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound for a very bad case of female trouble and it made me a well woman. My health was all broken down, the doctors said I must have an operation, and I was ready to go to the hospital, but dreaded it so that I began taking your Compound. I got along so well that I gave up the doctors and was saved from the operation."—Mrs. CHARLES MOORE, R. R. No. 3, Murrayville, Ill.

PRICE LIST SENT FREE UPON APPLICATION

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8 Full Quarts Rieger's Monogram Private Stock $5

4 Full Quarts Rieger's Monogram Extra Fine $3

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Over 165,000 customers have proven that our whiskey is far the best ever distilled. For smoothness and mellowness of flavor it cannot be equalled. Send remittance with order. Money refunded if whiskey is not perfectly satisfactory. Order today

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W. C. WATKINS, Box 1505, Parnassus, Pa.

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Address (Comrade) W. E. MOSES,
436 Jacobson Building, Denver, Colo.

Chicago Ledger

Entered as second-class matter June 25, 1886, at the postoffice at Chicago, Illinois, under act of March 3, 1879.

Published Every Saturday
By W. D. BOYCE CO., CHICAGO, ILL.
500 Dearborn Avenue.

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The Ledger employs no traveling agents to solicit subscriptions, and every person working in that capacity is a fraud. No person is authorized to take subscriptions for the Ledger unless he or she be well known in the city or village where they have been appointed agents to sell this paper every week. A liberal reward will be paid for evidence that will enable us to arrest and convict such persons as are now traveling from town to town in different sections of this country, claiming to be agents of the Ledger and thereby defrauding the people. Beware of strangers.

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Advertising rate $2.25 per Agate Line, per insertion, for advertisements in The Chicago Ledger and The Saturday Blade combined. These two weeklies have an average circulation of

1,000,000

COPIES WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS.

Folly is as plentiful as wisdom isn't.

Back talk is a great quarrel promoter.

Trouble hunters never come home empty-handed.

A strong breath sometimes indicates a weak character.

Keep your troubles to yourself and they will not expand.

A hammer sometimes misses its mark but a bouquet never.

It's easier to embrace a girl than it is to brace her father.

Men who are easily discouraged often quit before they begin.

Many a man with airship ambitions has toy balloon abilities.

Raise the standard of your work if you are working for a raise.

A fresh love affair is the best glue for mending a broken heart.

A milkman may be as rich as his cream and still not be wealthy.

One-half the world has an eye open for a chance to do the other half.

Look out for the sharp edges of the man who boasts of being square.

Everything comes to him who waits—including all kinds of hard luck.

Anyway, it's just as well to put off till tomorrow the worries of today.

Between two evils, give us a breezy man rather than one who is long-winded.

It doesn't take much nerve to call a man a liar—over a long-distance phone.

Never bring the family skeleton out of its closet for an airing when strangers are present.

Take care of your pennies—and the chances are your dollars will be blown in by your heirs.

Platonic friendship and perpetual motion are all right theoretically, but they refuse to work.

The man who makes hay when the sun shines doesn't have to borrow his neighbor's umbrella when it rains.

A woman will tell her neighbors that her husband is the best man in the world, but what she tells him in private is quite another story.

As long as there are people in the world who try to get something for nothing, a lot of other people will be able to live without work.

ANECDOTES OF PEOPLE

Force of Habit.

"How easy," mused Robert Edeson, "it is to form a habit and how hard it is to break one. Last week I was out on a little joy ride when I came to a dignified looking gentleman standing beside an auto, about which were scattered tools of various sorts. Two of the tires were removed. The dignified gentleman was perspiring freely and looking helplessly at a sympathetic lady in the tonneau.

"'Having some trouble?' I asked, stopping.

"'I decline to be interviewed,' he replied.

"'Carburetor out of whack?' I inquired.

"'I have nothing to say,' he answered stiffly.

"'Had a blow out?'

"'I will not make any statement at this time.'

"'Stripped your transmission?'

"'I don't remember.'

"'Look here, old chap, you seem to be in trouble. Isn't there anything I can do to help you?'

"'I refuse to answer on the advice of my attorney.'

"'Did the steering gear get stuck, or what?'

"'You may quote me as saying I had nothing to say.'

"'Well, you're a crusty person. Don't you want some assistance?'

"'I have nothing to say.'

"'O, don't bother him,' begged the sympathetic lady in the tonneau. 'The poor man has been a witness before the grand jury and two investigating committees in the last month and it has affected him oddly.'"

◆

Reported Incorrectly.

Senator Bankhead, discussing an eloquent speech that had been rather poorly reported, said:

"The report spoiled the speech. It was like old Hiram Earwig's account of Daniel Webster's last words. Webster, you know, as he lay dying, uttered the profound and significant sentence, 'I still live.' Well, Hiram Earwig of Skeeter Beach said to a visitor from the city:

"'Yawp, life's onsartin. Wot wuz it that thar New Englander said—Webster, I think? Yawp, it wuz General Dan Webster. He got off a good thing just afore he died. He riz up in bed an' says, says he:

"'I ain't dead yet.'"

◆

WHAT DO WOMEN WANT.

Cash governs the house—
That's the usual plan—
Man governs the cash
And baby governs the man.

Woman governs the baby,
And teaches it how to trot;
So, when you come to reckon it up,
It's woman who governs the lot.

◆

He Tried.

The difference, not merely of degree, but of kind which is supposed to separate the English rector from the inferior order of curates is exemplified in a case cited in St. James' Budget. Returning to his parish after his autumn holiday, a dignified country clergyman, noticing a woman at her cottage door with a baby in her arms asked: "Has that baby been baptized?" "Well, sir," replied the courtesying mother, "I shouldn't like to say as much as that, but your young man came and did what he could."

◆

His Final Task.

The heavy, fur-coated gentleman owned the gunpowder factory, and the lean, cadaverous person by his side acted as foreman and general factotum. "Yes, sir," remarked the menial to the master, "poor old Bill is dead, right enough."

"And how did it happen?" asked one employer sadly.

"Well, sir," came the reply, "you see, sir, old Bill went into the mixing room, and by mistake struck a match."

The boss looked surprised.

"Fancy Bill, of all people, doing that!" he cried. "I should have thought that would have been the last thing he'd do."

"It was, sir," replied the lanky one remorsefully.

Angthing in Trousers.

"Woman no longer regards marriage as the be all and end all of life," said Mrs. Miriam Sells Wagner at the State federation of women's clubs in New York. "Women no longer take Miss Nancy Price's view of marriage. 'Miss Nancy,' said a young girl, 'what kind of a husband would you advise me to choose?' 'Well, my dear,' said old Miss Nancy, peering up over the tops of her spectacles, 'if you can't get a bachelor or a widower I advise you by all means to take a divorced man.'"

◆

Spurring Him On.

A local business man had just taken his son, a former football star, into the office. Recently the following dialogue ensued:

"You don't seem to tackle work like you did football, son."

"The surroundings are different, father."

"I guess that's so. Maybe it would help if I instructed the other clerks to give your college yell at regular intervals."

◆

Working in the Dark.

Secretary MacVeagh at a dinner in Washington was urging the need of scientific financial laws.

"But let us make these laws scientifically," he said. "We must let in the light. We must work in the light. If we work in the dark, you know, we will go wrong—like young Cornelius Husk.

"Cornelius Husk was called one winter morning before dawn and told to go and harness the mule to the dearborn.

"The lad was too lazy to light a lantern, and in the dark he didn't notice that one of the cows was in the stable with the mule.

"As he tried to harness the cow his father, impatient at the long delay, shouted from the house:

"'Corney! Corney! What ye doin'?'

"'I can't get the collar over the mule's head,' the boy replied. 'His ears are frozen.'"

◆

Agreed.

The dinner over, the friends sat down in front of the fire after Mrs. Smith had gone upstairs.

"Well, my dear Jones," said Benedict, "now tell me quite candidly what you think of my wife."

Jones hesitated for a moment, then replied:

"Well, Smith, if I must speak quite candidly, I don't think much of her."

Smith patted him on the knee as he replied confidentially:

"Neither do I, my dear Jones—neither do I."

◆

His Surmise.

Hudson—I am wedded to art.

Judson—I should think art would keep talking about the virtues of its first husband.

WANT ADS

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BEAUTIFUL Ozarks, fertile valleys, rich mountains, flowing springs, fruit, grain, stock, poultry; prices right. J. C. Mitchell & Co., Fayetteville, Arkansas.

JEWELRY

FINEST Goldplated "Fitsure" braclet or beautiful Lavalier for one dollar. Factory Price. Isenman, 385 Bergen St., Newark, N. J.

MISCELLANEOUS

BARGAIN—Three fine neckties $1. Gold-plated Pin free. Ties and pin retail at $2.50. This offer is for short time only. Send $1 at once. Money refunded by return mail if not satisfied. Name colors desired. W. C. Watkins, Parnassus, Pa.

FREE Sample. Never fails. Send stamp. Sample and 31 pleasing pictures 20c. Ord Co., Long Beach, Calif.

GAMES AND ENTERTAINMENTS

MAGIC Tricks and Supplies. Amateurs supplied as well as the great professionals. Easy, Interesting, Entertaining. 120 page illustrated catalogue, price 10c. Read & Covert, 816 East 43rd Street, Chicago.

LOST PERSONS

HEIRS Wanted at once. 60,000 estates seeking claimants. You may be one. Facts in booklet BL. Send 2c stamp. International Claim Agency, Pittsburgh, Pa.

WANT ADS

AGENTS

FREE—"Investing For Profit" Magazine. Send me your name and I will mail you this magazine absolutely free. Before you invest a dollar anywhere get this magazine—it is worth $10 a copy to any man who intends to invest $5 or more per month. Tells you how $1,000 can grow to $22,000—how to judge different classes of investments, the real earning power of your money. This magazine six months free, if you write today. H. L. Barber, Publisher, 453, 28 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago.

AGENTS—$35 a week for two hours work a day, selling wonderful household necessity, new selling plan with free advertising does it. Collette Mfg. Co., Box 72, Amsterdam, N. Y.

WANTED Agents to sell rich looking Imported 36x68 rugs. $1 each. R. H. Carter, Milan, Tenn, sold 115 in four days. His profit $51. You can do as well. Write for sample offer and unique selling plan. Exclusive territory. Condon, Importer, Stonington, Maine.

AGENTS on salary or commission. The greatest agent's seller ever produced; every user of pen and ink buys it on sight; 200 to 500 per cent profit; one agent's sales amounted to $620 in six days; another $32 in two hours. Monroe Mfg. Co., X 96, La Crosse, Wis.

I WANT the names of every young white man in the country. Must be white, and between 18 and 25 years. Box No. 4, Palmetto, Florida.

POLITICAL Argument Settler. Election results past hundred years. Big seller. Send 10 cents for sample and selling plan. Bauman's Service Bureau, 603 East Water Street, Milwaukee.

MAKE Photos Cheap. Free camera, supplies, developing catalogs. Rex Bromide Co., Lincoln Park Station., Chicago.

BIG PROFITS IN FLUFF, solid shampoo, and Toilet Goods. Every woman buys and repeats. Commissions on re-orders. Sample free. Itaco., 1949 Orchard, Chicago.

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The Boy Detective;

Or, The Great Morgan Mystery

By Weldon J. Cobb

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CHAPTER X.

A CRITICAL MOMENT.

"WE WANT no lamp burners, I tell you."

"But, my dear madam."

"So, get out!"

"You little realize what an opportunity you are missing, my dear lady. One of our new patent resilient, non-reactionary diamond wicks will cause the oldest lamp to give out a light unequaled by a gas, electric or carbide illuminator. Ah, for instance, that old kerosene burner yonder."

Thus spoke Bob Archer, for the moment playing the role of a traveling agent for some new-fangled lamp device. He had located the house occupied by the mysterious Mrs. Cairns. He had even managed to penetrate boldly into an inner room before he was discovered by the indignant lady of the house.

Now, although she tried to bundle him off the premises summarily, Bob found opportunity to press his wonderful claims concerning the pretended wick sample he exhibited. His eyes everywhere, his hearing strained to catch the remotest sound about the old structure, his mind intent only on discovering some trace of the girl, he knew to be a prisoner under that roof, Bob received a sudden check.

From an adjoining room, red-faced and threatening, a man had suddenly appeared. He advanced upon Bob with menacing eye and clenched fist.

"Did this lady tell you to get out of here?" he growled forth.

"Why, yes," admitted Bob, with something of a shock.

"Then do it."

"My new illuminator——"

"And stay out."

Bob retreated with due discretion. In fact, he was not anxious at all to remain in that house. In a flash he had recognized the champion of the evil-featured Mrs. Cairns

"Barnes, the man I met at the city house last night," murmured Bob, a good deal astonished, as he got outside and made haste to disappear from the vicinity. "That means something"

It meant a good deal, to Bob's way of thinking. The appearance of this man here proved the connection between the Man with the Frozen Face and the mysterious young girl.

Further than that, that, the presence of Barnes indicated clearly that some urgency, some decisive moment in a hidden program was on the books.

"I must lose no time," reflected Bob. "In working this end of the case I must not let the men in the city escape. Still, I feel sanguine that this girl holds the key to the motive and mystery of this intricate case."

Bob feared that his appearance at the old city mansion had aroused, if it had not alarmed, the plotters While it was true that they believed him dead, they might still be uneasy for fear he had confided his suspicions to others. This would result in their executing their nefarious project, whatever it might be. Possibly they might leave their city quarters and conceal themselves in some new obscure retreat.

Bob had a fleeting impulse to return to the city and inform Wooldridge of all the details of the case he had discovered to date. Pride in solving a giant enigma himself deterred him, however. Besides that, his interest in the Man with the Frozen Face he was not as yet ready to impart to anybody. That was his own sacred secret. The face of the young sleuth became grave and hardened as he reflected on this feature of the complication

"I must locate that girl—I must see her, speak to her, learn her story," decided Bob, firmly

It took Bob several hours to discover that no one approached the lonely house or its vicinity without being watched closely by either Mrs. Cairns or the man, Barnes. In fact, every half-hour, in addition to keeping a keen outlook from the inside, the fellow patrolled the garden.

The young detective came across a clever young farmer living about half a mile from the Cairns house. This man had quite a grudge against the woman on account of her getting some summer boarders away from him one season. He seemed to guess that Bob was questioning him about Mrs. Cairns with no idea of benefiting the woman. He therefore was quite willing to lend himself to a scheme Bob devised.

"I'll be plain with you, farmer," said Bob, "because I feel that I can trust you."

"Don't doubt it, if it's likely to block any game of that old Cairns witch," said the farmer, bluntly.

"I want to find out if the woman is keeping a young girl an unwilling captive in the house," explained Bob.

"I know she is. Everybody else knows it, but we don't dare to interfere. You'll find it's worth your life to get into that den, though."

"I have a plan," said Bob. "You can help me."

"Just tell me how."

"I see you have a wagon all loaded with hay yonder."

"Yes, going to take it to town in the morning."

"Is there any way you could break down on orders with your load at a certain place, if you were paid for your trouble the damage?"

"I think I could manage it."

"Very well. Here is my plan. I will hide in the hay. You drive along the road that lines the Cairns house."

"I see."

"Just as you get right in front of the house, you break down."

"I can fix it so as to do just that," declared the man.

"Then you unhitch your horses and leave the breakdown there till morning. That is all I ask, and I will pay you twenty dollars for helping me."

"That's a bargain."

Just at dusk, after manipulating one wheel of his wagon, the farmer started on his way.

Just as the load got alongside the Cairns house, sure enough, off went the rear wheel. So nicely had the farmer planned the maneuver, that the hay load tipped almost against the house.

Both Mrs. Cairns and Barnes came out. The farmer acted distressed at the accident. He said he would have to wait until daylight, till he could get a blacksmith to fix the wagon wheel. Then he drove his horses away.

Bob noticed, with a great deal of satisfaction, as he burrowed down into the hay, that the top of the load came directly under a barred window, before which, earlier in the day, from a distance he had seen a girlish form flit to and fro.

As the darkness grew, Bob placed himself in a poistion to keep a close eye on the window in question. After about an hour, a light showed in the room beyond the barred sash. Bob saw Mrs. Cairns come into the room. She carried a lamp and a tray containing food.

The rays of the lamp fell upon a beautiful young girl, seated in a dreary attitude near a table. Mrs. Cairns spoke a few words to her, and set the tray before her.

There was something in the pale, lovely face of the girl that at once enchained the interest and sympathy of the young detective. She did not respond to her cruel jailer, nor notice the food. Bob discerned that the poor friendless waif was immersed in some deep anguish of soul.

He made no definite move for a long time. Barnes came out of the house and went all around it several times. Finally a light in one part and then in another part of the house went out. Entire darkness finally shrouded the isolated place in gloom and silence.

Bob arose in his yielding covert of hay, and steadied himself to find a firm foundation to reach up to the window. He grasped the sill on the outside.

Tap—tap—tap!

With a pencil he rapped softly but clearly across the iron bars. A sigh, a quick aspiration sounded in the apartment beyond.

"She is awake—good!" murmured Bob.

He repeated his cautious signal. There was a startled but subdued cry. The rustling of a dress followed. Then the inmate of the room came directly up to the window. A pale, wondering face was presented. The girl whom the young detective had seen in the room earlier in the night gazed out at him. Her clear, glowing eyes regarded Bob with surprise. Her white hands held to the iron bars and trembled as she stared fixedly at him

"Who—who are you?" she gasped, breathlessly.

"I am a friend," answered Bob, with promptitude. "Speak low, young lady. I have risked a great deal to be of service to you. Those in this house—they are your enemies"

"Oh, yes! yes!" panted the girl.

"They are also mine. Try and be calm. I have a great deal to tell you. Then I must have your story.'

"But I do not understand," murmured the girl.

"Then, briefly, I am from the secret police. I am the person who received your telephone message at detective headquarters last night."

"Oh, I know now!" cried the girl, hopefully. "But how did you find me? Were you in time to save the brave lawyer who was working so nobly and unselfishly in my behalf?"

"Alas, dear young lady," answered Bob, gravely, "I was too late. But not too late to run down the merciless fiends who caused his death."

"His death!" gasped the girl.

"Yes, he was murdered."

A wild, unrestrained scream echoed from the lips of the horrified girl out upon the still midnight air.

CHAPTER XI.

A FRIGHTFUL FATE.

In one flashing instant of time the boy detective realized that the emotion and excitement of the young girl within the barred room had spoiled all of his well-laid plans.

"S-sh!" whispered Bob warningly, but the mandate came too late.

Almost immediately, as if he had been on close watch and ward just outside the door of the room, Barnes burst into the apartment.

Bob made a quick movement to dodge back out of sight, but Barnes must have seen him. Rushing to the window, he extended through it a revolver.

Crack! A bullet whizzed by Bob's ear. Then he became aware that his vengeful enemy had precipitated a catastrophe upon which he had not reckoned.

So near to the crisp, tindery hay had been the discharge of the weapon, that the burning powder had ignited it. A great flare, a blinding flash shot up, as the hay burst into vivid flame.

Snap! The trigger again played, but there was no report. Bob was just getting ready to jump from the blazing load to the ground, when Barnes, foreseeing the escape of a spy, a foe, thrust his arms between the bars of the window.

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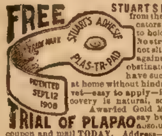

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Thud! His aim was an expert one. The revolver went whizzing through the air. It landed directly against Bob's temple. The crushing contact met his head like a projectile sent from a cannon. Bob felt his senses desert him. He sank, collapsed. His body slid down the side of the hay load. It met the hard, bare ground with a crash, and there Bob lay, imperiled and insensible.

How long he remained in a state of complete inert unconsciousness, Bob could not tell when he again opened his eyes. It was to find himself gagged and tied, hand and foot.

He lay in a room in some old rickety house. It was chill and unfurnished. Through a half-open doorway light partly penetrated his prison place. Then came the sound of a familiar human voice, and the young detective knew that he was in the hands of his enemies.

“The house went up in flames,” Barnes was saying. “We barely managed to escape with the girl. It was a lucky thing that you arrived with the wagon just when you did.”

“It seems so,” replied a voice that Bob recognized as belonging to one of the men he had seen at the mysterious city home of the Man with the Frozen Face. “Orders to me were to come after you and fetch the girl and woman to the city.”

“We pulled this young detective away from the blazing wagon just in time,” spoke Barnes. “We've got him safe enough now.”

“We can't take him to the city.”

“To escape us again?” jeered Barnes. “No, indeed.”

“I'd like to know how he escaped, after a knife was driven into him and he was dropped into an old well.”

“That's a mystery that should be investigated. We can't afford to leave him loose.”

“No he must die,” declared the other, savagely. “And what about the girl?”

“She is with Mrs. Cairns in the next room!”

“Yes.”

“Bring her in.”

The door was opened. The sound of low sobbing fell upon the hearing of the young detective. The girl he had tried to rescue was evidently brought into the adjoining room.

“Sit down,” spoke the gruff voice of Barnes. “Young lady, you understand that we are taking you to your uncle.”

“He is not my uncle!” cried out a girlish voice, which abruptly checked itself.

“How do you know that?”

There was no reply.

“I have brought you this far on the way to the city,” proceeded Barnes, after a pause. “As you know, the young man who attempted to rescue you was foiled in that attempt.”

“Oh, where is he—the brave, loyal young man who risked his life on my behalf?”

“He is here.”

“Here?” repeated the girl, breathlessly.

“Yes.”

“Under this roof?”

“He is.”

“Oh! let me see him!” pleaded the girl. “Let me thank him for his kindness.”

“Be silent. He is a bound and gagged prisoner. As I say, we are to take you to the city home of your uncle. If you go quietly, you will not be molested. If you cry out or try to escape, we will drug and muffle you.”

“But the young man?” questioned the girl, in an intense tone.

“He dies.”

“Oh, never! Oh, do not murder him as—as another was murdered.”

“Ha!” hissed Barnes, suspiciously, “what do you mean by that?”

Again the girl maintained silence.”

“Let it pass,” muttered Barnes. “You will have to explain all this, your strange knowledge, your strange friendships, to your uncle, when you see him. Meantime, a direct question.”

“Yes? yes?”

“Do you doom or save this young man, our enemy and our prisoner?”

“I?”

“Yes, you.”

“The choice is mine?”

“It is.”

“How can I save him?”

“By going to the city quietly.”

“Yes, I will do that.”

“And consenting to marry a man your uncle has chosen for your husband, and promising to guard his secrets.”

“No, no—never!”

“Then your Quixotic friend in the next room dies,” declared Barnes.

The young girl wept bitterly.

“Barnes,” spoke the other man, “dispatch the prisoner.”

“No! no!” shrieked the girl.

“You will do as I have proposed?” demanded Barnes.

“I must! I must!” moaned the girl. “What does it matter? My life, surrounded by mystery, is a torture to me. Spare the young man.”

“You promise to meet the demands of your uncle?”

“Yes, I will do so,” assented the girl, in broken, despairing tones.

Bob Archer struggled to twist the muffling gag from his lips, if only for an instant, to tell the girl to refuse the sacrifice imposed upon her. The young detective found himself helpless.

“Take the girl away,” spoke Barnes to his companion. “Send her with Mrs. Cairns to the city.”

“And then?”

“Return here. I have some important business on hand.”

The girl was led from the next room. There was a long spell of silence. Finally the man seemed to return.

“Well?” questioned Barnes.

“They are on their way. What next?”

“Our prisoner.”

“You are going to spare him.”

“Rather not,” retorted Barnes, jeeringly.

“But you promised the girl.”

“Pah! Do you for a moment imagine that we dare give liberty, life to this mysterious young sleuth, who has twice nearly spoiled our game? As it is, his appearance will hurry our plans. The girl must be married to some one of the gang, and we must vanish till we find out if others are on our trail.

“I see,” said the man. “And the prisoner?”

A low hurried confab ensued, the words of which Bob could not catch. Finally the two men came into the room.

Barnes lifted Bob up, releasing the bonds imprisoning his feet. They led him out into the night. The surroundings were lonely and obscure. Across a waste stretch, half a mile away, there loomed up the outline of some big factory buildings. In its direction the men led Bob.

“Are you sure the mills are in operation?” queried the companion of Barnes.

“Yes.”

“They were on a strike, I thought?”

“They resumed work yesterday.”

“Ah.”

“You see my plan is the only sure one.”

“I should say so—no clew or trace as to what has become of this bold young meddler.”

The two men took a route remote from streets and houses. Finally they reached a high fence. They lined this, forcing Bob along with them. Finally they came to where two boards in the fence were missing. They passed through this aperture.

Old molding flasks and great heaps of black sand, slag, cinder, and iron castings littered the yards of the works. The men went across to where a great building was aglow with industrial activity. Near to a towering chimney was a ladder leading up to an enormous box or bin with a window to it.

Not one of the workmen was visible about the yard or that part of the building. The great bin was, in fact, a sort of storehouse of coal. Within the shop an iron chain opened and closed the slanting chute of the bin, which let down the fuel as required into the great boiling blast furnace.

Barnes and his companion forced Bob up the ladder. They held him against the window. The young detective, helpless, held tightly in their grasp, could not resist them.

“Ready,” spoke Barnes.

“In with him!” echoed his companion.

They gave Bob a toss. He struck the great slanting mass of fuel and rolled over and over.

Clang! The chain was loosened from within the plant. A scorching glare belched out as the chute door was raised.

A rolling, twisting form was buffeted about. It was swallowed up with the rushing torrent of coke, by the hideous gaping mouth of the blast furnace.

Clang! The great iron shutter closed. The two men, satisfied completely, glanced at each other.

“Done for, this time!” observed Barnes coolly.

“Cinders by this time,” added his companion, heartlessly. “That is the last of the boy detective!”

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

“Hands up!”

Sharp, definite, mandatory, the words were addressed to the Man with the Frozen Face in his home, his lair in the city. One minute previous he had sat alone in the great room where he was first seen by Bob Archer. Now, as through a doorway, a lithe, active form swung deftly into view, the astonished criminal, the pretended brother of the murdered miser, the real Dudley Lane, obeyed the order in amazement and trepidation.

“Who are you?” came hoarsely from his lips.

“Look.”

The intruder drew from his face the bearded disguise he wore, revealing—the boy detective.

“You!” gasped the startled Lane. “Impossible!”

“Yet as you see,” answered Bob, calmly.

“My men—they swore that you were disposed of.”

“Mistake,” interrupted Bob, rapidly.

“They saw your body go rolling down into the fiery caldron——”

“No. It was a figure stuffed with straw, used by the strikers at the mill in their parade. They had thrust it into the fuel chute. My clothing was caught by a hook in the wall. When your accomplices had left the place, I escaped.”

Dudley Lane grew steadily paler as each word of this remarkable story was delivered. Now he made a start for a doorway behind him.

THE OLD PLEA

He “Didn't Know It Was Loaded.”

The coffee drinker seldom realizes that coffee contains the drug, *caffeine*, a serious poison to the heart and nerves, causing many forms of disease, noticeably dyspepsia.

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“At first I was troubled with indigestion. I did not attribute the trouble to the use of coffee, but thought it arose from other causes. With these attacks I had sick headache, nausea and vomiting. Finally my stomach was in such a condition I could scarcely retain any food.

“I consulted a physician; was told all my troubles came from indigestion, but was not informed what caused the indigestion. I kept on with the coffee and kept on with the troubles, too, and my case continued to grow worse from year to year until it developed into chronic diarrhea, nausea and severe attacks of vomiting. I could keep nothing on my stomach and became a mere shadow, reduced from 159 to 128 pounds.

“A specialist informed me I had a very severe case of catarrh of the stomach which had got so bad he could do nothing for me and I became convinced my days were numbered.

“Then I chanced to see an article setting forth the good qualities of Postum and explaining how coffee injures people so I concluded to give Postum a trial. I soon saw the good effects—my headaches were less frequent, nausea and vomiting only came on at long intervals and I was soon a changed man, feeling much better.

“Then I thought I could stand coffee again, but as soon as I tried it my old troubles returned and I again turned to Postum. Would you believe it, I did this three times before I had sense enough to quite coffee for good and keep on with the Postum. I am now a well man with no more headaches, sick stomach or vomiting and have already gained back to 147 pounds.” Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

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A MAN tried to sell me a horse once. He said it was a fine horse and had nothing the matter with it. I wanted a fine horse. But, I didn't know anything about horses much. And I didn't know the man very well, either.

So I told him I wanted to try the horse for a month. He said "All right, but pay me first, and I'll give you back your money if the horse isn't all right."

Well, I didn't like that. I was afraid the horse wasn't "all right" and that I might have to whistle for my money if I once parted with it. So I didn't buy the horse although I wanted it badly. Now this set me thinking.

You see I make Washing Machines—the "1900 Gravity" Washer.

And I said to myself, lots of people may think about my Washing Machine as I thought about the horse, and about the man who owned it.

But I'd never know, because they wouldn't write and tell me. You see I sell my Washing Machines by mail. I have sold over half a million that way.

So, thought I, it is only fair enough to let people try my Washing Machines for a month, before they pay for them, just as I wanted to try the horse.

Now, I know what our "1900 Gravity" Washer will do. I know it will wash the clothes, without wearing or tearing them, in less than half the time they can be washed by any other machine.

I know it will wash a tub full of very dirty clothes in Six minutes. I know no other machine ever invented can do that, without wearing out the clothes

Our "1900 Gravity" Washer does the work so easy that a child can run it almost as well as a strong woman, and it don't wear the clothes, fray the edges nor break buttons the way all other machines do.

It just drives soapy water clear through the fibers of the clothes like the force pump might.

So, said I to myself, I will do with my "1900 Gravity" Washer what I wanted the man to do with the horse. Only I won't wait for people to ask. I'll offer first, and I'll make good the offer every time.

Let me send you a "1900 Gravity" washer on a month's free trial. I'll pay the freight out of my own pocket, and if you don't want the machine after you've used it a month, I'll take it back and pay the freight too. Surely that is fair enough, isn't it?

Doesn't it prove that the "1900 Gravity" Washer must be all that I say it is?

And you can pay me out of what it saves for you. It will save its whole cost in a few months, in wear and tear on the clothes alone. And then it will save 50 cts. to 75 cents a week over that in washwoman's wages. If you keep the machine after the month's trial, I'll let you pay for it out of what it saves you. If it saves you 60 cents a week, send me 50 cents a week till paid for. I'll take that cheerfully and I'll wait for my money until the machine itself earns the balance.

Drop me a line to-day, and let me send you a book about the "1900 Gravity" Washer that washes clothes in 6 minutes.

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"Not yet."

With the words a new figure confronted him. It was Wooldridge. Lane turned and rushed towards a curtained alcove. As if by magic the draperies parted. Four detectives from Central silently, grimly challenged his further progress.

"Caged!" he hissed, and sank into a chair helpless.

"Yes," answered Bob Archer, quietly but forcefully. "You have reached the end of your rope."

"And you are under arrest," interpolated Wooldridge, stepping forward.

"On what charge?" huskily demanded Lane.

"Murder."

"Some old case——"

"No, a new one—the murder of a man named Morton, at Rossiter Buildings."

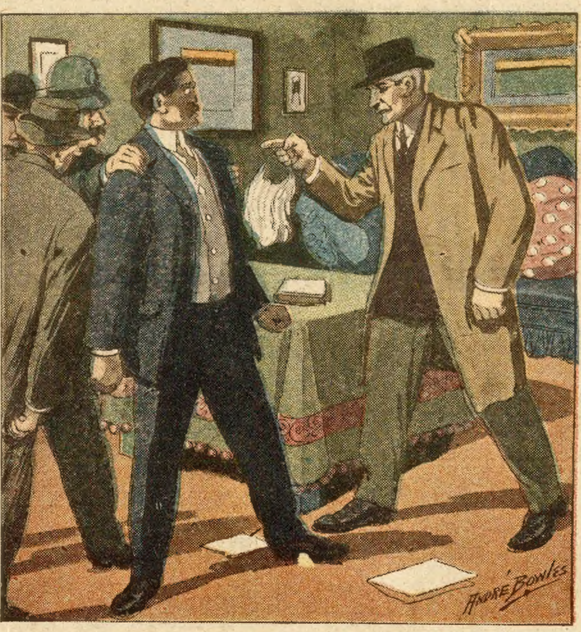
"The proof?"

"The story of the young lady whom you have held as a prisoner for years—the niece of the former occupant of this house, whom you murdered years ago."

"Where is she?"

"In a room below, where your confederates are in charge of half a dozen police officers," replied Wooldridge.

The end had indeed come for Dudley Lane. It was the morning after the terrible ordeal at the blast furnace. As Bob had just said he had marvelously escaped from the terrible fate intended for him. He managed to remove the ropes from his wrists and the gag from his lips. Then he hurried to the city.



"Richard Lyon!"

An hour's consultation, and Wooldridge was in possession of the story of the young sleuth. Accompanied by a sufficient force of assistants, they had quietly surrounded and then entered the house of tragedy and mystery.

They had surprised the confederates of Lane, and had found their young girl captive locked up in a room. But for their timely arrival, the beautiful Elise Morgan would that morning have been forced to marry one of the emissaries of Lane, in order that he might force her to claim and share with him the Morgan estate.

Bob and Wooldridge had explained to the mystified and terror-stricken Elise who they were. Then they had learned her story.

For years, deceiving her with some false tale, the hired accomplices of Lane had kept her under surveillance and restraint. Recently, she told Bob, they had removed her nearer to the city. She had one day escaped their vigilance and had met a lawyer of Fairview. To him she had imparted her suspicions. He had undertaken to go to the city, taking up quarters at Rossiter Buildings, intent on slowly unraveling the mystery surrounding his persecuted young client.

In some way, Lane and his crew had learned of this. The night Elsie had telephoned to headquarters, she had overheard a conversation of some of the plotters with Mrs. Cairns, revealing the plot to murder.

"I have come here to relate a story," spoke Bob, now in the lair of the desperate Lane. "I will make it brief. You murdered the old miser, Mr. Morgan, and decamped with a large fortune in ready cash. You stole his niece, intending later through her to secure the rest of his estate. When Richard Lyon arrested you, some of your friends rescued you and made that brave detective a prisoner."

Lane listened, ashen to the lips at this fearsome arraignment. He did not answer by so mus a s one word.

"You had plenty of money," continued Bob. "The one obstacle in your way to reveal your iniquity was Richard Lyon. You set up a scheme to destroy him, worthy of your cunning and malice. You disguised a confederate to represent 'Old Marvel' in that distant city. Apparently he deposited and drew out from a bank a large amount of money. You arranged it so that to all seeming the brave old detective had sold himself for a bribe, and had disappeared to enjoy in some safe remote country the results of his treachery."

"Where did you learn all this?" exclaimed the astonished Wooldridge.

"You shall soon know," replied Bob. "Richard Lyon was placed by you, Dudley Lane, under the care of a skilled physician in your employ, a poisoner and an ex-convict. That man gave to the detective drugs which robbed him of his reason. Then Richard Lyon was shipped to Australia, and sent out into its wilds to wander about and die."

"This is remarkable!" murmured the intensely interested Wooldridge.

"You, yourself," resumed Bob, "de-

"You, yourself," resumed Bob, "demarks of identification the police had on record regarding you. Then you reappeared as the Man with the Frozen Face. Your first step was murder. The first step of the police is to avenge the lawyer by sending you to the gallows."

"Prove it, prove it if you can!" hissed the scoundrel, Lane, malignantly. "Prove, too, all your fairy romance about Richard Lyon. Who are you, who possess all this vaunted information concerning a man probably dead, at least missing, for years, from the sight of men?"

The boy detective looked his challenger squarely in the eye. Simply, but dramatically, he spoke:

"I am the son of Richard Lyon—'Old Marvel.'"

The terrific announcement thrilled Wooldridge. It bewildered Dudley Lane. Stern-faced, erect, the young sleuth did not speak again for some moments. Then he resumed:

"My father, knowing how perilous and precarious was his professional calling, had placed me at an academy in Delaware. He had deposited, as a sort of trust, with the principal sufficient money to carry me through several years study. About a year ago I received a strange letter. It was from a poor bushman in Australia, who had found my father wandering about, in a remote wilderness. He had given him shelter, discovered hsi papers, and from these knew where I was. My father had a lucid interval. He had told the bushman of the wicked work of his criminal enemies. I at once determined to go to Australia. The school principal to whom I related a part of my story provided me with money. A second letter told that my journey would be of no avail, as my father was dying."

The narrator paused for a spell. Then he continued:

"From that moment I had but one motive in life—to become a detective. Slowly, surely to hunt down the destroyer of my father's good name. Dudley Lane, I have found you. My father shall be avenged!"

"I fancy it will be rather difficult for you to prove all you state," sneered Lane.

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I have a recipe for these troubles that you can depend on, and if you want to make a quick recovery, you ought to write and get a copy of it. Many a doctor would charge you $3.50 just for writing this prescription, but I have it and will be glad to send it to you entirely free. Just drop me a line like this: Dr. A. E. Robinson, K-207, Luck Building, Detroit, Mich., and I will send it by return mail in a plain envelope. As you will see when you get it, this recipe contains only pure, harmless remedies, but it has great healing and pain-conquering power.

It will quickly show its power once you use it, so I think you had better see what it is without delay. I will send you a copy free—you can use it and cure yourself at home.

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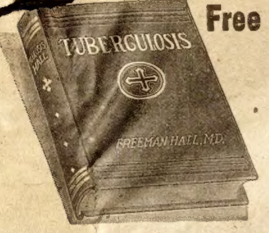

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"I don't believe you can legally identify me."

"Mistake!"

From some secret door the speaker of the word stepped into the room. It was the man who had so strangely used the trick dagger the night Bob's life was in such deep peril.

"What are you doing here, Provis?" demanded Lane, with a fierce scowl.

"I am not Provis," calmly replied the man who had acted so strangely in behalf of Bob.

"Who are you, then?"

"Richard Lyon."

The man whom the plotter had trusted as an emissary swiftly tore off his false beard and wig.

"Old Marvel!" rang like a pistol shot from the lips of Wooldridge.

"My father, oh, my father!" cried the boy detective, trembling with excitement and joy.

The intruder walked over to Bob and placed a shielding, affectionate arm about his shoulder.

"My brave boy!" he spoke in a tone of intense feeling. "You have brought to a climax what I had only just begun. The illness I had in Australia completely restored my reason. I could not find you at the school where I had left you—I started alone to run down this arch villain, Dudley Lane. I managed to get into his employment. He asks for proofs. From his private papers I have the names of the various surgeons he went to, who removed the recorded marks of identification."

* * * * *

The case was complete. It took some time to unravel all of the strange, tangled threads of one of the most remarkable cases the Secret Service had ever handled. All was made clear at last.

Lane went to the gallows, while his accomplices were awarded long terms of imprisonment in the State penitentiary.

The family of the brave lawyer who had died in striving to learn the mystery surrounding the life of the beautiful Elise Morgan, were well provided for by her when she became the proved heiress to the murdered miser and came into her fortune.

There was a royal welcome given to the veteran detective by the city police department. His star was restored to its original place of honor, and his fair name cleared in the records of the force. He, however, did no more active work in the department. Rather was he sought out as an expert for advice, when intricate cases required the dexterity of a master mind.

Bob continued in the detective service. He sought distinction and usefulness, however, in cases where the poor and the persecuted needed a friend and champion. He became the lover and then the husband of the beautiful Elise Morgan. Tho her he was her hero, and she always delighted to think of him as her first ideal—the Boy Detective.

The End.

❧ ❧ ❧

The Second Son's Plot.

(Continued from page five.)

day, and they won't allow it, no way. I see'd him with me own eyes and then they tells me as I didn't."

"Are you sure you saw Mark in the city, Rip I didn't know that my brother had been away," Arthur observed, a strange light in his eyes.

"Sakes a' mighty, sir! Can't I believe what I sees with my own two eyes?"

"Of course you can, Rip," the other replied, soothingly. "But would you swear it was Mark you saw? It might have been some one who resembles him, you know."

"It was Mr. Mark, hisself," the peddler grunted disgustedly. "I have known Mark since he was a wee tot, and I guess I know him when I see him."

"I guess you would, too, Rip," the other replied, and with a queer smile he passed on down the street.

As Arthur Fanshaw walked away, his thoughts ran thus:

"Old Rip is mistaken, of course, for Mark has not been to the city, I know. It must be the other one he saw. How alike they must be to deceive one so completely. I must have Blackburn hunt the fellow up. I must see the resemblance for myself. There is a mystery there that I can't solve. Rip knows Mark well, and I know that Mark was not in Lower Town on Friday. The resemblance must be marvelous, since so many are deceived. Old Mrs. Hendon would swear that she saw Mark at the circus in Rockcliffe Park, when I know that Mark was at home. Apparently there must be two Marks, and they must be as like as two peas. But if Mark is what Blackburne tells me—my mother's illegitimate son—my mother seems to have forgotten it. I fear there must be some mistake. I have thrown out a number of hints, but she doesn't seem conscious of my meaning. One of these days I shall speak mighty plain. It is only right that I should; and Grace shall know all—and then?"

This extremely interesting story will be continued in next week's Ledger, presenting the readers with some very strange happenings. If you are not a subscriber to the Ledger, you are strongly urged to send in your subscription at once. Every family should take the Ledger, as humor and stories and pictures make life brighter and pleasanter for all, bringing health and entertainment and doing every one good. Be wise and attend to this today.

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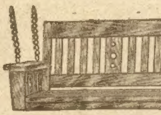

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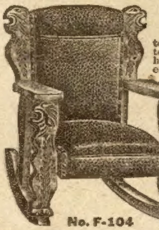

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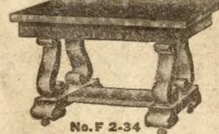

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Your fingers were not made to poke
  In Bridget's lemon ice.
Don't try to swallow fast—you'll choke;
  Such manners are not nice.
Six doughnuts are too many, dear,
  For one small girl to eat.
Do chase the puppy out of here—
  Look at his muddy feet!

Your sandals never should be put
  Upon the music stand.
Your glove's not made for either foot;
  You wear it on your hand.
And when you find your father's tie
  Upon his dressing-case
Don't use it for a sponge and try
  To scrub your dolly's face.

Don't throw your stockings in the grate
  Nor twist them in a rope.
Don't put your ribbons in the plate
  Where mother keeps the soap.
You're such a squirmy little miss—
  Keep still you can't or won't.
We always talk to you like this:
"Be quiet! Stop that! Don't!"

◆

Diamond's Opportunity.

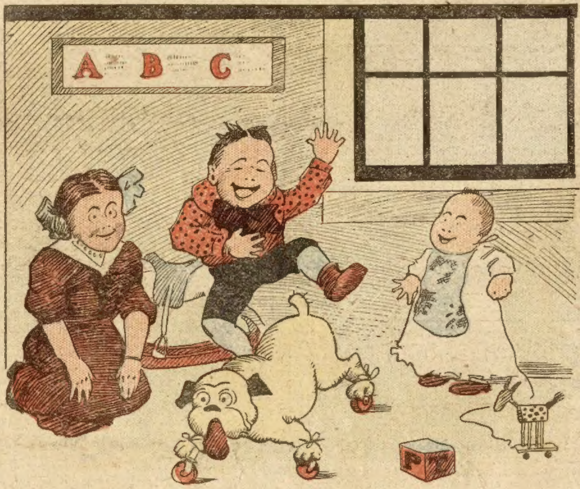
They were having a cat show in Pittsburgh a while ago, and the old city hall, which was the place of exhibition, was housing a multitude of soft-coated, ill-tempered cats. The cats were not all naturally ill-tempered, but no cat can keep its good nature at a show. Dogs can't, and dogs are much more eager to be admired than cats are. Diamond did not hanker after a place on the exhibition bench, but he did wish that he might get at some of the pampered cats. Diamond is himself a cat, but he is not the kind that is exhibited for prizes. When he wins prizes he fights for them, and he can lick anything of his own size and weight in Pennsylvania. He makes his living by catching rats, but when he is not at work he fights just for the fun of it. That is, he fights when he can find a cat that is not acquainted with him and does not know what is going to happen.

All Diamond's friends had fled from the alley where he lives, and he was lonely. He had been listening to the mews and the yowls that had been coming out of the old city hall, and he determined that he would get into the building. He has never told any one how he managed it, but he did get in, and then he curved up his back and licked his mouth and said to himself, "My meat!" He wanted to fight them all at once, and there was no one to hinder, because the show was ended for the day and there was no one near except the watchman, who was in another part of the building and so not especially near at that. Diamond explained to the cats what he thought of them and their luxurious habits and he dared them to come fight him. The cats blinked. Diamond growled and tried to roar, and he worked himself into a fury, and then, since no honorable cat would come to fight him, he made for the nearest of the lot. That was the beginning. In a minute the exhibition room was filled with yowls and growls and hisses and shrieks of the cats that were fighting and the cats that were looking on. Diamond had started in to clean up the place, and by the time the watchman came in he had made an excellent beginning. There were some unhappy cats left to lick their torn hides when Diamond was put out into the alley.

◆

The Oldest.

If you ever go to Independence Hall in Philadelphia, ask to see the quaint little doll that is carefully preserved there. She came over from Paris, dressed in the fashion of Louis XVI., long before these United States were in existence. She came to bring into William Penn's woodland a flavor of the Old World that was much sought after in those days. She served two purposes; first she was a fashion-plate from which the ladies of those days eagerly made their dresses; second, when she had served her purpose in this way she was given to the children to play with. Think how well-made she was and how carefully she has been preserved to outlast the wear and tear of the centuries! She may well be called the oldest inhabitant of Philadelphia.



"Mamma, come quick to the nursery! The youngsters have taken the casters off the table legs and tied them on Hector's feet—the poor beast is roller-skating."

◆

Tot Wit

One evening small Bobby yawned at the supper table. "Mamma," he queried, "what makes people have mouth-stretchers."

—

"Why, Nettie," said the mother of a 4-year-old miss, "how did you tear your apron?"

"It got sticked on a nail and jes' tored itself," explained Nettie.

—

Small Walter had been spending the afternoon at a neighbor's, and upon his return home his mother asked if he had been a good boy.

"Yes, mamma," he replied, "I didn't do a thing but breathe."

—

Edith (aged 3, for the first time noticing the new moon)—Oh, look at the star!

Herbert (aged 5)—No, that is not a star. That's just what is left over from last night's moon.

—

Teacher—Well, Johnny, did you find out what an "omen" is?

Johnny—Yes, ma'am. I asked papa and he said "omen" was something that caused man a lot of trouble if it had a "w" before it.

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